

**2023**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**TENTH ASSEMBLY**

**ACT Annual Report for National Closing the Gap Agreement 2023**

**Presented by  
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Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
September 2023**

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**ACT**  
Government

# ACT Annual Report for National Closing the Gap Agreement 2023

Jurisdictional report

September 2023



**CLOSING THE GAP**

ACT Government

# ACT's Closing the Gap Annual Report

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## Ministers Foreword

I am pleased to present the ACT Government's 2023 Annual Report on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) and the 2023 Impact Statement on progress under the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* (ACT Agreement).

The Annual Report forms a critical component of the ACT's reporting requirements under the National Agreement and the ACT Implementation Plan and delivers on commitments made by the ACT Government as a Signatory to the National Agreement.

The Annual Report focuses on how the ACT is implementing the Priority Reform Areas under the National Agreement and outlines performance against actions under the ACT National Agreement Implementation Plan.

The Impact Statement provides an update on the Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Targets. It has been developed to monitor progress against the ACT Agreement.

The ACT Government is committed to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Self-determination is an underpinning principle of the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being genuine partners with shared decision making is critical in government decision making on matters which affect the community, and in holding government to account against our commitments.

We are committed to continue to strengthen existing partnership arrangements with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, the Our Booris Our Way Committee, and the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee to deliver on these commitments.

To deliver against Priority Reform 2 of the National Agreement, the ACT Government has focused efforts on investing in significant infrastructure improvements and service expansions for existing Aboriginal community controlled organisations (ACCOs). In 2023 we established the Aboriginal Service Development Branch within the Community Services Directorate, with the primary focus being to work in partnership with and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community strengthen ACCOs that deliver critical services within the community.

The Annual Report also highlights the investment being made by the ACT Government in measures that will Close the Gap. As always, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at the centre of these.

While many of the investments and reforms underway may not show as significant changes in the data for many years, there are already some positive signs that we are moving in the right direction.

The ACT has seen positive moves in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and attainment across education targets, including improvements in the number of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people engaged in employment, education and training.

In addition, we are seeing progress towards reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the justice system.

While these figures are heartening and there is much that we should be proud of, we know there are areas where we are not seeing our efforts reflected in the data today, including the continued overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

These reports are an opportunity to review and reset our efforts to strengthen outcomes into the future. Through working closely with our Agreement Partners, we will continue to embed the principles of transparency and accountability in our reporting, to improve the way we measure and report on progress against the National Agreement, and to strive towards self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## High-level summary

The ACT Government is working to build a strong foundation of partnership, collaboration, and self-determination to deliver our commitments under the National Agreement. This is demonstrated through our work to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a strong voice to government, including through the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (the Elected Body) and other representative bodies.

The ACT Agreement aligns closely with the four Priority Reform Areas and 17 socio-economic targets contained within the National Agreement. The ACT Government is committed to transparent reporting on implementation progress and outcomes under both the National Agreement and ACT Agreement. An *Agreement Outcomes Framework* (the Outcomes Framework) was created to track progress against targets in both the ACT and National agreements. The *ACT Annual Impact Statement* (the Impact Statement) is the statement of performance against the Outcomes Framework. The 2023 Impact Statement delivers on the data requirements for this Annual Report and is provided at Appendix A.

The ACT Government benefits from strong partnerships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, including:

- The Elected Body, which was established in 2008 and is the key representative body for the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT;
- The United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC), a representative body of Traditional Owners in the ACT.
- The Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee advises the Government on the management of Country in the ACT. The strong partnership between the ACT Government and Traditional Owners through the committee ensures Country is cared for and appropriately managed through cultural knowledge and resource management.
- The *Our Booris Our Way* review was a government-commissioned, exclusively Aboriginal-led review of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the ACT's statutory child protection system. Following the review, an Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee (OBOW IOC) was established as an exclusively Aboriginal committee who continue to oversee the implementation of the 28 recommendations and 8 sub

recommendations of the review, ensuring that self-determination remains central to how the Government responds to the significant challenge of overrepresentation in child protection.

- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (Winnunga), which is the ACT's sole Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service. The ACT Government's partnership with Winnunga not only covers primary and allied health outcomes, but also provides health support to the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees.
- Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation is a youth and family focussed Community Controlled Organisation who has been operating in Canberra's south for over two decades.
- A range of other partnerships with smaller and emerging ACCOs, including through the work of the Aboriginal Service Development branch to support stronger ACCO sectors delivering more services to the community.

These partnerships are just some of the ways the ACT Government is seeking to engage better with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in the spirit of self-determination, to achieve their aspirations and address the matters that affect their lives. The Government acknowledges the contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to the community through the generous sharing of knowledge and culture. As the seat of Federal Government and the home of the Australian Public Service, the Government further acknowledges the contributions of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans to all Australians.

The ACT Government acknowledges that the intergenerational impacts of colonisation, dispossession and the harmful policies and practices of past Governments, driven by institutional racism, are the root cause of the statistical gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

There is work underway across the ACT Government to address systemic racism and improve the cultural safety and accessibility of government services. This includes ongoing efforts across government agencies to attract, develop and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, the development of Reconciliation Action Plans, as well as specific programs of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community to improve cultural responsiveness and safety.

While the data shows us that significant challenges remain in Closing the Gap, the ACT Government is pleased with the progress we are making in delivering new investments guided by the National Agreement. Some key highlights are listed below and are discussed in more detail throughout the document:

- Providing \$19 million towards the construction of a new purpose-built facility in for Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
- Partnering with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services to construct a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility as part of the \$49 million redevelopment of the Watson Health Precinct
- Providing support and advice to Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation to deliver wholistic services for Aboriginal children and families in the ACT as well as facilitating office space in the Yarramundi Cultural centre.

- Funding the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to support the revitalisation of the Ngunnawal language and culture, and the development of a business case to develop an Indigenous Language Centre for the ACT.
- Continued support to facilitate the hiring of the Yarramundi Cultural Centre events space to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and community.
- Upgrading the Boomanulla Oval and facilities to accommodate more sporting matches, including the upgrading of lights to support more night games.
- Providing over \$1.3m in grants to Sisters in Spirit, Yerrabi Yurwang and Clybucca Dreaming to deliver advocacy and support services delivering against the report 'We Don't Shoot our Wounded' 2009 recommendation four.
- In March 2022, Housing ACT delivered the third and final complex for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people named Ningulangu (Nin-gul-angu) (meaning 'belonging to home, place').

The initiatives and reforms highlighted in this report show the ACT Government's commitment to implementing the National Agreement. The ACT Government is committed to building and strengthening structures that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to practice self-determination and share decision-making with government as we progress together towards Closing the Gap.



## Reporting progress through the ACT Annual Impact Statement

The ACT Annual Impact Statement reports on targets set in the Outcomes Framework and has an associated data dashboard available online for the community. The Dashboard will soon be updated six-monthly. Both the Dashboard and the Impact Statement represent the public reporting on the progress of the implementation of the ACT Agreement.

Targets and corresponding indicators set in the Outcomes Framework are closely aligned to the targets set in the National Agreement. These are reported by the Productivity Commission. Therefore, the Impact Statement provides an update on the National Closing the Gap socioeconomic outcomes. The Outcomes Framework comprises additional targets and indicators that provide a wider assessment of progress for the ACT.

The dashboard is an interactive tool for community and contains information reflected in the Impact Statement including multiple years of ACT data on each metric for the years between baseline and current year data.

The second Impact Statement is attached to this report at [Appendix A](#). In line with Priority Reform 4, the ACT Government is committed to improve reporting under the ACT Agreement. This year's Impact Statement includes a high-level summary on the progress of achieving the outcomes and more detailed data visualisation. The Impact Statement provides the latest reported data and year-on-year comparisons as well as visualisation of data trends. Non-Indigenous population data have been included to provide a visualisation on the progress of closing the gap. Data disaggregation by sex when pertinent have also been included.

Overall, the available data indicates the ACT has significant progress to make in closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous residents, as continues to be the case across Australia. The ACT expects that many of the investments and reforms being made today may not be reflected meaningfully in the data for many years. However, there are already some positive signs that we are moving in the right direction, and that partnerships with and investments in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are the key to achieving our shared goals.

## Embedding Priority Reforms

### Priority Reform 1 – Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making

The ACT Government continues to promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, knowledge, and culture in decision making including through existing partnership arrangements with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee, the ACT Reconciliation Council, and the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee.

The partnerships detailed below support shared decision making and provide valuable advice from Community to government. While some of the below partnerships do not meet all of the formal partnership elements outlined in the National Agreement, they address the priorities that are important to our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and, therefore, the Government.

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body**

The ACT Government benefits from 15 years working in formal partnership with the democratic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (Elected Body). The Elected Body was established in 2008 to enable the full diversity of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to have a strong, democratically elected voice to government. This was done in partnership with a previous ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Council, which provided advice to and worked in partnership with the ACT Government.

The Elected Body, representing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT, is an equal partner to government in the development of the ACT Agreement. Through the ACT Agreement, the ACT Government and the Elected Body are committed to supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to actively influence and participate in social, economic and cultural life.

The Elected Body has the power to hold public hearings, providing opportunity to hold Ministers and officials to account and giving the Elected Body the access it requires to appropriately scrutinise the Governments implementation of the ACT Agreement.

The Elected Body are represented on both the ACT Government's Strategic Board (as active participants) and Inter-Directorate (as co-chair) Committees, consulting and advising on a broad range of government policy and program delivery. These Committees are whole-of-government forums and are inclusive of ACT Government Senior Executive and officials with oversight and responsibility for providing strategic leadership on all aspects of the ACT and National agreements.

The Elected Body is also a member of the national Coalition of Peaks, and together with the ACT Government, as members of the Joint Council, work to implement the National Agreement.

The ACT Government has allocated funding to provide remuneration to Elected Body members and Secretariat support; being a senior officer and additional support staff to carry out appropriate

administrative functions of the Elected Body. Additional funding is also provided to the Elected Body to ensure all required consultative practices are carried out appropriately.

### **United Ngunnawal Elders Council**

The United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) is a Traditional Owner representative body, providing advice to the ACT Government in relation to heritage and connection to land matters for the Ngunnawal people. UNEC also provides advice to the Elected Body in accordance with section 9 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*.

UNEC was established to represent the interests of Traditional Custodians of the ACT. It is made up of representatives nominated by several Ngunnawal family groups. The Council meets up to four times a year in Canberra at various locations. The ACT Government has provided funding to assist UNEC through employment of a dedicated secretariat, as well as remunerating members through sitting fees.

### **Healing and Reconciliation Fund**

The ACT Government has fully funded a \$20 million Healing and Reconciliation Fund to support community priorities over the next decade. The development of an appropriate governance structure for the Healing and Reconciliation Fund is ongoing and will continue to be progressed throughout the 2023-24 financial year.

The Healing and Reconciliation fund will also continue to support opportunities to rediscover and share Ngunnawal culture and language; working with Traditional Custodians to provide clarity on issues relating to ancestral connections, cultural authority and the ACT Indigenous Protocol; and working to support broader community engagement on healing, reconciliation, engagement and treaty processes within the ACT.

### **Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee**

The Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC) is a partnership mechanism that facilitates the active engagement of Traditional Custodians in the work of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD). The DNCCC empowers self-determination for Ngunnawal people, ensuring they can speak for their Country and that Ngunnawal cultural values, knowledge and aspirations have a distinct role in the natural and built environments of the ACT. The committee meet monthly and provide advice, guidance and decision-making for several activities including but not limited to the following:

- Cultural Resource Management Plan
- Ngunnawal Ngadjung Water Initiative
- ACT Water Governance
- Mulligan's Flat Woodland Sanctuary Governance Reform and Implementation Plan
- Tidbinbilla Functional Review
- National Koala Monitoring Program

This partnership improves engagement with Ngunnawal people to work together and support the integration of cultural knowledge in management of Country and to provide support and assist in a decision-making capacity for the Directorate and its staff, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal.

### **Advisory bodies across government**

The ACT Government also consults with a range of internally administered advisory groups with specific policy expertise or interest. These include:

- The OBOW IOC, who oversee the implementation of the *Our Booris, Our Way* review into the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system;
- The Justice Advisory Group and Justice Caucus, which provides input and guidance on the development, implementation, and monitoring of progress against the Justice Focus Area Action Plan of the ACT Agreement;
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consumer Reference Group at Canberra Health Services (CHS), which works to ensure the community has input into services provided by CHS and information provided to the community; and
- The ACT Reconciliation Council, who act as community leaders for Reconciliation and promote the ACT's nation leading Reconciliation Day Public Holiday.

### **Wellbeing Impact Assessments**

The ACT Government also seeks to ensure that decision-making processes draw upon consultations and shared decision making with First Nations Community, ACCOs and/or community groups.

The use of Wellbeing Impact Assessments (WIAs) supports Government to consider the wellbeing impacts of any proposal on the community, including on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. WIAs are a requirement for Cabinet Submissions and Budget business cases.

## Priority Reform 2 – Building the Community-Controlled Sector

As a small jurisdiction, the ACT has only a small number of existing ACCOs across a limited set of sectors. As well as investing in significant infrastructure improvements and service expansions for existing ACCOs, the ACT Government is focussed on supporting the community to establish new organisations in sectors where there isn't currently an ACCO delivering services.

Two specific areas of focus are the creation of a community-controlled housing organisation and a community-controlled service focusing on children, young people, and families.

This year, the ACT Government established the Aboriginal Service Development (ASD) Branch within the Community Services Directorate (CSD).

ASD's key focus is to support the development and enhancement of established, new and emerging ACCOs across the ACT region to deliver human services. ASD also provides high-level strategic policy development and service design advice. The Branch aims to embed a genuine partnership approach and relationship between the ACT Government and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and human services sector.

ASD is currently developing an ACCO Policy to better guide and coordinate whole-of-government efforts to enable and support the ACCO sector. This will cover the planning, management, and delivery of human service programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

The development of an ACCO Policy is an identified action under the ACT Government's 'Closing the Gap 2021 Implementation Plan'. Priority 2 directs 'CSD to work in partnership with other directorates to develop a Policy Paper outlining our approach to genuinely partner with ACCOs and businesses to deliver better services and capability'.

Over the last year, the ACT Government has supported or undertaken work to:

- Providing \$19 million towards the construction of a new purpose-built facility in for Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
- Partnering with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services to construct a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility as part of the \$49 million redevelopment of the Watson Health Precinct
- Providing support and advice to Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation to deliver wholistic services for Aboriginal children and families in the ACT as well as facilitating office space in the Yarramundi Cultural centre.
- Funding the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to support the revitalisation of the Ngunnawal language and culture, and the development of a business case to develop an Indigenous Language Centre for the ACT.
- Design and build a new demountable office and event space at Boomanulla Oval to support community use.

- Upgrade the Boomanulla Oval and facilities to accommodate more sporting matches, including the upgrading of lights to support night games and events for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Support ACCOs in the use of Yarramundi Cultural Centre and Boomanulla Oval while working in partnership to support transition of these facilities to Aboriginal community control.
- Providing over \$1.3m in grants to Sisters in Spirit, Yerrabi Yurwang and Clybucca Dreaming to deliver advocacy and support services delivering against the report 'We Don't Shoot our Wounded' 2009 recommendation 4.
- Engaging the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to develop and expand the available curriculum resources for ACT public schools, integrating local language and culture.
- Delivering Ngunnawal Language Workshops - during the 2022-23 period, six workshops were held with a total of 71 participants.
- Working with Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation to deliver Throughcare, a client-centred program through ACT Corrective Services designed to enable First Nations clients to succeed as they transition from prison to living back in the community.

Through the development of genuine partnership between ACT Government and ACCOs this year, we have been able to support local organisations in leasing arrangements to secure office space, support for the development of organisational governance structures, and provide funding for service delivery in Children, Youth and Families, Housing, Domestic, Sexual and Family Violence, Health and Justice.

The ACT Government is committed to continuing their support into other areas of service delivery to ensure the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community have a wholistic and culturally safe services run by the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector.

## Priority Reform 3 – Transforming Government Organisations

The ACT Government is focussed on ensuring government agencies and the services they provide are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The below actions and projects are currently underway or recently completed to transform our agencies and the services they provide to ensure cultural safety, best practice, and shared understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs and goals.

### Housing and homelessness services

In March 2022, Housing ACT delivered the third and final complex for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people named Ningulangu (Nin-gul-angu) (meaning 'belonging to home, place'). Fulfilling a commitment under the ACT Housing Strategy, ACT Agreement, the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly, and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. To achieve this successfully, Housing ACT worked closely with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elected body (Elected Body) to deliver three dedicated long-term older persons accommodation, each site comprising of five dwellings. The Elected Body was involved in the initial concept, design development and community engagement process for each of the developments.

In 2022, the Community Services Directorate held a series of engagement activities with homelessness service providers, individuals with a lived experience and other key stakeholders to plan and design future homelessness services in the ACT. Included in these consultations were specific engagements with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that sought to gain insight into the unique challenges facing First Nations people and to foster a more inclusive and culturally sensitive response.

- The ACT Housing Assessing Team have set up regular fortnightly meetings with Everyman Australia's Indigenous Liaison Officers to discuss and support applicants who identify as First Nations and who are residing in transitional housing or receiving outreach support.
- The Tenant Experience Youth Team have worked with Gugan Gulwan, other providers with First Nations identified workers and family members to better meet the housing needs for young First Nations people on the young first nations people on the priority needs register. An example of this was working across community, family and the individual to facilitate a mutual exchange of properties between a young person and a family member. Within a three week turn around to ensure the young person was housed appropriately and able to secure a bigger home for herself and her children.
- Housing Assistance Policy engaged Curijo, a local ACT majority Aboriginal owned company, to develop a Community Participation Approach (CPA) and Implementation Framework (IF). These two documents aim to guide HACT in how we are to strengthen our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through embedding culture practices across the organisation in a co-design approach.

The perspectives and input provided by stakeholders at these engagements offered crucial insights into the issues and barriers that exist within the system for this cohort, including the historical, cultural, and systemic factors that contribute to homelessness within the Indigenous community. The findings have directly informed the strategic investment plan that sets out how and where the ACT Government will invest in the future homelessness service delivery for the ACT. These insights included the need for

developing consistency in the sector in cultural competency, developing a system wide approach to supporting First Nations people and better enabling processes that can result in self-determined outcomes for this community.

In 2022-23, the ACT Government allocated \$36.312 million to the homelessness sector. This investment is provided through both the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and the ACT Government funding. Of that funding, CSD allocated \$1.4 million to six programs in the Specialist Homelessness Sector that specifically support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These programs include transitional accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in all their diversity at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness as well as services that provide information, advice, advocacy and support around housing related issues. Dedicated funding is also provided to improve the cultural competence of services working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and to improve systemic responses to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

### **Gateway Services**

The Reimagining Gateway project (the Project) was established in 2021 with the intent to implement changes to ACT Housing's application and assessment process, with the aim of enhancing customer experience, improving efficiency, and supporting good decision making. The Project is a key deliverable of the ACT Housing Strategy, the CSD Strategic Plan and embeds the Model Social Landlord Framework into practice. Consultation on the new application form and assessment process was undertaken with over 20 representatives from homelessness and community sector organisations, and other groups representing a range of community groups, including the CSD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Co-Design Network. The Co-Design Network provided valuable feedback from a service user perspective on the questions and wording used in the application form, the supporting documents and evidence gathered, and the process itself. Other feedback gathered through this consultation process has provided invaluable advice and suggestions on how staff can be more culturally aware and sensitive when interacting with a First Nations person or family seeking support from Housing Assistance.

### **Our Booris, Our Way**

Government continues to implement the recommendations from *Our Booris, Our Way* review. The *Our Booris, Our Way* review made a number of recommendations to the ACT Government on systemic improvements needed to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. Recommendations focused on three broad areas: reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system, improving the experience of children and young people whilst in care, and increasing pathways for restoration to parents, kin and culture.

In the last 12 months the ACT Government has worked with the OBOW IOC to:

- Review the *Children and Young People Act 2008* to incorporate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.
  - In October 2022, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) delivered two reports: '*Embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle in the Children and Young People Act 2008 (Act): Final Report*' and '*Supplementary*



*paper: Defining Kinship Carers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in the ACT*. The final report contains 21 recommendations developed after extensive consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

- Legislative amendments progressed in 2023 to the *Children and Young People Act 2008* will enshrine a strong legislated standard that the child placement principle must be considered when determining the best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- In this first stage of legislative amendments the five elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle – prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection will be inserted into the legislation. Further amendments will also be made in stage two to support the work to embed the child placement principle in legislation in the ACT.
- Pass the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner Bill* in November 2022. An interim Advocate has been in place since November while a national recruitment process is underway. The Commissioner will provide advocacy and advice on systemic and individual cases.
- Establish a First Nations Family Support Team. This experienced and dedicated team is working with families to keep children safe and connected to culture and community. The team are developing a new practice framework led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.
- Strengthen the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship carers a First Nations Kinship Liaison Officer has been recruited. This officer is providing targeted and culturally informed support for any kinships carer, regardless of where they are in their caring journey.
- Commence a Care and Protection Legal Advocacy Service in 2023. Provided by the Aboriginal Legal Service, it provides culturally appropriate legal and advocacy services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families coming into contact with the ACT's child protection system.
- Release a Charter for Parents and Families was released. The Charter sets out a shared understanding between families and child protection staff, and what everyone can expect when working together. This will support positive and respectful ways of working together to enable the best outcomes for children and young people and their families.
- Strengthen information on the ACT Government website specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship carers. Sharing information on what it means to become a kinship carer and the supports available to kinship carers.

Additional activities include comprehensive staff training on culturally led practice, policy and practice reviews to embed the child placement principle and the provision of monthly and quarterly data about the child and youth protection system.

In January 2023, the Community Services Directorate (CSD) established the Aboriginal Services Branch, which facilitates the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in response to *Our Booris, Our Way*.

## **Mental Health Commissioning**

The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is engaging in a collaborative commissioning approach to design the future provision of health services delivered by ACT Government funded non-government organisations (NGOs) in the community. The Mental Health Commissioning Process, led by Mental Health Policy and Strategy (MHPS), aims to promote a Mental Health system that can support recovery focussed, integrated, holistic, and outcomes driven services for Canberrans.

This project is now in its Design phase. The Design phase is where ACTHD is exploring how commissioned services can address the priorities identified through earlier phases of commissioning.

To guide consultation in this phase, MHPS has developed a 'Blueprint for the Design Phase'. This document highlights key considerations for the commissioning of an effective mental health system and sector. These include the underpinning principles of the sector, consideration of different service categories and acuties of services, and the priority groups who are either at higher risk of poor mental health, or who need specific considerations for service provision. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as a specific priority group.

As a consultation document, the Blueprint contains a range of questions on each of its key considerations, including the priority groups, which are seeking feedback from the community to help define priorities and to design the range of mental health services delivered by ACTHD funded community NGOs.

The Mental Health Commissioning process, in line with other ACT Government Commissioning Subsectors, recognises that as a result of intergenerational trauma, ongoing impacts of colonisation and social and economic disadvantage, increased morbidity, mortality and disability, reduced social supports as well as racism and discrimination Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are often at an increased risk of developing mental illness.

## **Draft Child and Adolescent Clinical Services Plan**

Members of the ACTHD Health Services Planning Unit and a Child and Adolescent Clinical Services Expert Panel member spoke with staff and clients at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm to gain their views and experiences when accessing health services. Outcomes of this visit were provided to the Expert Panel and have informed the Panel's work.

On 16 May 2023, targeted consultation commenced on the draft Child and Adolescent Clinical Services Plan (the Plan). Health Care Consumers' Association hosted a forum for its carer and consumer networks to speak with the Child and Adolescent Clinical Services Expert Panel Chair and members to provide feedback on the draft Plan. Attendees included the Chief Executive Officer, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (Winnunga) and Community Services and a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

Staff of the ACTHD Health Services Planning Unit and Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm, Health System Planning & Evaluation (HSPE) Division and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnerships team together hosted a stall at the 6th Annual Reconciliation Day event at the National Arboretum Canberra on Monday 29 May 2023. The aim of engagement with the community was to increase awareness of the health service planning process, consult on the draft Plan and promote the healing programs for First

Nations people at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm. Community members were invited to complete a survey, with 110 people responding, providing insight into their experiences of accessing health care in the ACT. Survey results will inform other ACTHD planning activities.

### **Engagement on ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030 (ACTHSP)**

During the development of the ACTHSP research and data analysis were undertaken to understand demographics and health service access and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, NGOs providing health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, peak bodies and Government agencies were consulted to underpin a needs analysis reflective of Canberrans and provide evidence to support actions in the ACTHSP.

ACTHD hosted a stall at 2021 ACT NAIDOC family day as part of this consultation process. 31 individuals participated in a survey at the NAIDOC Family Day regarding their experiences of the ACT public health system. Lessons learnt from this event were applied to the 2023 Reconciliation Day event planning, which contributed the high rate of engagement.

Themes from consultations with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and partner organisations include:

- Need for culturally safe services.
- Need for language-based information about health services that are available, and how to access/navigate them.
- Need for patient/consumer navigators.
- Need for preventative health programs in priority areas.
- Better access to health services in key areas.
- Better cultural competency for healthcare workers.
- Better career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.
- Demand for mental health services including suicide prevention.
- Determining the issues underneath the observed underutilisation of public health and hospital services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Recommendations in the ACTHSP were informed through these consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans including input from partner organisations and the community. The ACTHSP contains 121 actions with specific action items to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, being:

- Address underrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the public health system by undertaking a data linkage project to improve the use of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identifier in health data sets to identify gaps and priorities for action.
- Improve health and access to health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Canberra region through implementation of Canberra Health Services 'Together, Forward' Action Plan.

- Improve workforce representation through the implementation of the Canberra Health Services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan.
- Deliver on commitments for health services under the ACT Agreement, including:
  - establishing a culturally appropriate residential rehabilitation facility for alcohol and other drugs;
  - boost delivery of Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgery for at risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, children, and young people;
  - enhance the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm as a culturally based healing program;
  - develop tailored health and wellbeing programs at Alexander Maconochie Centre; and
  - strengthened support for mental health and suicide prevention.

### **Strengthening Partnerships – Investing for Social Impact (Commissioning Framework)**

The Community Services (CSD) and ACT Health (ACTHD) Directorates are leading the transition to Commissioning for Outcomes for the services they fund and deliver. Commissioning aims to change the way that government and the non-government organisation (NGO) sector partner to provide community and health services which support Canberrans. Commissioning involves government and the NGO sector working closely together, and with community members with lived experience, to design and deliver services which better meet community need and enable people to achieve the outcomes that they want for themselves and their families.

Self-determination and equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a key priority for commissioning. There is strong alignment between commissioning and First Nations engagement principles, in particular a focus on close partnerships, trust and relational approaches which move away from traditional power dynamics between government, the NGO sector and community members. Through commissioning we seek to better enable discussions between diverse parties and take the time to understand perspectives, enable truth telling and support community-led solutions.

Commissioning has continued to progress across a range of sectors guided by the 2022-2024 Commissioning Roadmap that was released in late 2022. The new Roadmap provides greater guidance on the practice of commissioning; forecasts commissioning activity across more than 30 cycles involving CSD, ACTHD and JACS; and identifies a range of strategic challenges that must be addressed to achieve human service system reform. Establishment of the Aboriginal Services Branch within CSD enables greater self-determination of how first nations communities wish to engage with commissioning and integration across numerous commissioning processes with a focus on Aboriginal Community Controlled sub-sector.

In the coming months and years, commissioning processes will progress across a range of areas in CSD ACTHD and JACS. Through these processes government will continue to work closely with the NGO sector and community members (including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, both Community Controlled Organisations and community members), to collaboratively design and deliver vital community and health services.

## **Procurement**

In 2022, the ACT Government delivered on a commitment under the National Agreement by conducting a whole of government review of expenditure on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and activities (the Expenditure Review), to provide better information that may inform future resource allocation decisions.

Among other findings, the Expenditure Review demonstrated that the Government's work under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP), including efforts to increase the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers for large building projects, is having a real impact. Procurement expenditure directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers more than doubled between 2019-20 (\$7.8 million) and 2020-21 (\$18.4 million).

As part of the implementation of the Government's Procurement Reform Program, a review of the ATSIPP will commence in the 2023-24 Financial Year. The terms of reference to support the review are being considered and will include opportunities to consider ways to enhance the operation to continue to meet the objectives of the Policy.

The review and actions under the reform program will not disrupt the current policy and its operation which will continue to ensure the ACT Government can maximise opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises.

## **Domestic Family and Sexual Violence**

In April 2009, the We Don't Shoot Our Wounded report (the WDSOW report) was released, based on a larger study looking at the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV), and their access to justice and to services.

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office (DFSVO) worked closely with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group (the DVPC Reference Group) to identify key recommendations from the WDSOW report for priority action. Recommendation 4 of the WDSOW report was identified by the DVPC Reference Group as a priority action.

In February 2023, the ACT Government commenced an open grants process to support the implementation of Recommendation 4 of the "We Don't Shoot Our Wounded..." report, to enable community organisation to apply for up to \$530,000 (GST exclusive) in funding. Based on the recommendation, a new service was to be established where a range of legal, advocacy, practical and healing activities can be delivered for ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have experienced domestic and family violence.

As a result of this process, a total funding amount of \$530,000 was allocated to Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation to establish and deliver their Nara-Gana-Wali Strengthening Families Program which aims to provide culturally safe and responsive support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, domestic and family violence. The program will also include the provision of complex and intensive case management services.

In 2022-23, the ACT Government allocated \$2.075 million of funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence to Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants.

Over \$1.1 million of grant funding from the FDSV Grants was awarded to programs providing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including to:

- Clybucca Dreaming Women's Outreach Program - building community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who were formerly detainees of the Alexander Maconochie Centre who are living in the ACT and surrounding region and who have experienced domestic and family violence.
- Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation's Aboriginal Women's Advocacy program - an advocacy and support service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in the ACT.
- Whispers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Softball Corporation's Community Healing Our Way program – providing activities aimed at healing trauma and sharing information about domestic, family and sexual violence, including through sporting activities, healing basket weaving, therapeutic art projects, food-tasting sessions run by traditional owners on Ngunnawal land and developing media and information materials.
- Yeddung Mura (Good Pathways) Aboriginal Corporation's Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Aboriginal Support Program - supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families affected by family, domestic and sexual violence through activities such as men's diversion, a trauma-informed community education program, family-centred healing camps and yarning circles incorporating financial services delivered by financial counsellors.

During 2022-23, the ACT Government has been working closely with the Australian Government and other state and territory governments to support the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan for the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan was developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members across Australia, including in the ACT. This Action Plan will guide ACT Government actions in the coming years as we continue work to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in our community

### **Justice and Corrective Services**

The 2022-23 budget provided \$11.5 million over four years to fund a coordinated program of initiatives in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to help reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT's criminal justice system. This includes new initiatives to make a real and immediate impact and continuing established programs that have demonstrated positive results.

- ACT Justice and Community Safety has partnered with multiple organisations to deliver the programs below. These programs have been developed in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to ensure they are targeted and able to provide real impact in the community and reduce the number of adults and young people in the justice system. Throughout 2023-24 these programs are being reviewed and refreshed through targeted engagements with the community to ensure they continue to have the desired impact. Yarrabi Bamirr (Winnunga, Yeddung Mura and Clybucca Dreaming) provides a family-centric model of support for First Nations families to reduce or prevent contact with the justice system and consequently, improve life outcomes.

- Throughcare (Yeddung Mura) a client-centred program designed to enable First Nations clients to succeed as they transition from prison to living back in the community. The program works with the ACT Corrective Services Throughcare Unit to provide individualised and intensive case management and trauma informed support. Throughcare provides support such as mobile phones, medicine, identification documents and assistance with services such as housing, Centrelink and other providers and programs.
- Empowering Yarning Circles (Yeddung Mura) is a series of yarning circles that focus on helping ex-detainees to stay in the community and rebuild their lives. The program supports re-establishing links to community and culture, restoring relationships with family, friends and peers and supporting and enabling clients to manage their own lives.
- Front Up (Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT) is provided by the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT to support First Nations people who have an outstanding warrant(s) or have breached bail or a community-based sentence. The program helps them to present to Court and negotiate on their behalf to have the matter resolved, where possible, without a period in custody.
- Ngurrambai Bail Support Program (Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT) includes court-based bail support, outreach bail support, Alexander Maconochie Centre support and after-hours bail support. It is designed to reduce the number of First Nations people on remand, and help First Nations people to apply for, gain and stick to their bail conditions.
- Galambany Circle Sentencing Support (Yeddung Mura) provides support to people appearing before the Galambany Circle Sentencing Court. This Court gives eligible First Nations adults who have committed an offence a culturally relevant sentencing option, in consultation with local Elders. The Court Support program offers transport to and from court as well as to any recommended or court-appointed appointments or programs.
- Interview Friends: (Legal Aid ACT – First Nations staff) a revised program for providing an interview friend for First Nations people coming into custody in its final stages before implementation in July/August 2023. Initially to be provided by the ALS, the pilot program will instead be provided by First Nations staff through the Client Services Unit of Legal Aid ACT. Full-time employees (and session workers) will be engaged to provide the service 24/7, replacing the former volunteer-based system that ceased operation in 2018.
- Yurwan Ghuda – (strong child/children) (delivered by a cross-directorate team, a First Nations contract facilitator and assistance from Gugan Gulwan) an On-Country program is in the final design stage for commencement in late July/August 2023 – pivoting to assist in over-representation by supporting 10-14 year olds who come into, or are at risk of coming into, contact with the criminal justice system with the opportunity to participate in On-Country activities.



## Priority Reform 4 – Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

The ACT Government is working to strengthen ways to share data and information through the Impact Statement, supporting the community to identify and monitor priorities under the ACT Agreement. Work is currently underway to ensure that the Elected Body and community are able to access the information and data they require to hold ACT Government directorates accountable for delivering the outcomes details in the agreements.

### **Governance Framework**

The ACT Government is working to strengthen the governance arrangements in place to ensure that the Strategic Board Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and the Inter-Directorate Committee are regularly updated on the progress of outcomes and actions under both the National and ACT Agreements.

Each of the Focus Area Actions in the ACT Agreement have been assigned to a lead directorate. This directorate will be responsible for bringing responsible directorates together to provide six-monthly progress reports to the Strategic Board and Inter-Directorate committees on the actions undertaken and the progress towards delivering the outcomes. This information will also be made available to the Elected Body, within a timeframe that allows for the Elected Body to query the information provided during its public hearings.

### **Impact Statement and dashboard**

The Impact Statement and associated data dashboard are updated annually and represent the public reporting of the Outcomes Framework. The second Impact Statement is attached to this report at Appendix A.

The Impact Statement and dashboard comprise a compilation of ACT data that provide a signal of this jurisdiction's annual progress against a set of ACT indicators closely aligned with the 22 Closing the Gap targets.

In addition, the dashboard includes data against each metric for any additional years between the baseline and current year data, providing a year-on-year comparison. The categories of progress are attributed to each data item and indicator across all years.

The dashboard contains more information than the Impact Statement including multiple years of ACT data on each metric for the years between baseline and current year data. The dashboard is a useful reference for those requiring more detailed knowledge of data including data movements over a number of years.

### **Indigenous Health Data Sovereignty and Governance**

ACT Health has engaged the Australian National University and Maiam Nayri Wingara to implement Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance (IDS-G within ACTHD and with ACT and Region First Nations Communities. An initial focus (Phase 1) on implementation of IDS principles and establishing IDG



mechanisms will build knowledge and awareness supporting later (Phase 2) implementation of IDS.

Activities for Phase 1, initiated in 2022-23, include:

- socialising the concepts of IDG and IDS within ACTHD through education and capability building;
- socialising the concepts of IDG and IDS with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in the ACT through a series of Community engagement workshops;
- assisting ACT Health to develop IDG policies and procedures for an IDG governance structure; and
- evaluating and monitoring systems change with the implementation of IDS principles and IDG mechanisms.

The IDS-G project will also implement relevant ACT Government commitments under the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement.

## Supporting Closing the Gap Goals

The ACT Government will continue to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and community-controlled organisations to implement the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement in the spirit of partnership and self-determination.

Additional efforts and investment the ACT Government is undertaking in reaching National Agreement targets and actions are outlined below.

# Conclusion

The ACT Government reiterates its commitment to self-determination, through co-design, partnership and investment in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Successive ACT Budget's demonstrate the impact the Government's partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, through the ACT and National Agreements, is having on Government priorities and the allocation of resources.

The Government acknowledges that this is generational reform. It may take many years for the full impact of investments and policy changes to become apparent in the data.

As we progress work to deliver outcomes envisaged by the National Agreement and ACT Agreement, the Government will continue to partner with the Elected Body, ACCOs and the broader community to support equity and self-determination for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

## Appendices

**Appendix A – ACT Annual Impact Statement 2023**

**Appendix B – ACT Progress Report on Sector Strengthening Plans (ACT Health, and Education Directorates)**





# ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028

National Agreement on  
Closing the Gap 2023

ACT Annual Impact  
Statement 2023



**ACT**  
Government



## *Gulanyin dhuniang, ngalawirinyin, dhunayinyin, Ngunnawal dhawra.*

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land we are on and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

## Acknowledgement

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

The ACT Government acknowledges the historical dispossession and its continuing legacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and their vital ongoing contribution to the ACT community.

We acknowledge the deep significance of families' enduring connections to kin, community, culture, language and Country. We also acknowledge the cultural wisdom and strength found in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures and approaches to raising children.



## Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

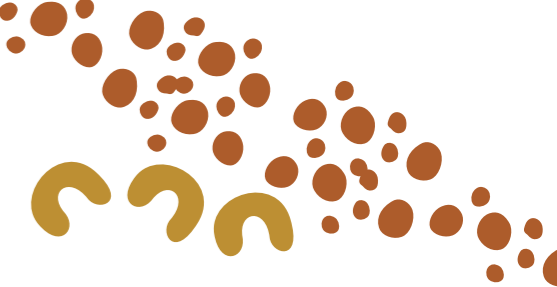
If you are having difficulty reading a standard printed document or website content and would like to receive the information in an alternative format, such as large print or audio, please call the **Community Services Directorate's general enquiry line on 133 450**.

If English is not your first language and you require the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)**, please contact us through the **TIS phone interpreting line on 131 450**.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, you may wish to contact us through the **National Relay Service (NRS)**. See the NRS page on the Infrastructure Australia website [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au)







# About this impact statement

The ACT Government is committed to transparent reporting on implementation, progress and outcomes under the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28 (the ACT Agreement)* and the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 (the National Agreement)*. As a point-in time snapshot, this Impact Statement measures the ACT's progress against both agreements.

The ACT Agreement sets the long-term direction in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs in the ACT and the priorities to enable equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Implementation of the ACT Agreement is articulated in ten focus areas which capture areas of life where the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community aspire for better outcomes. Four core focus areas (Community Leadership; Connecting Community; Cultural Integrity; and Inclusive Community) and six significant focus areas (Children and Young People; Health and Wellbeing; Lifelong Learning; Economic Participation; Housing; and Justice).

ACT Agreement Focus Areas	
	Community Leadership
	Health and Wellbeing
	Connecting Community
	Economic Participation
	Cultural Integrity
	Lifelong Learning
	Inclusive Community
	Housing
	Children and Young People
	Justice

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (the Elected Body), as a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and a member of the Coalition of Peaks, have played an active role in the development and negotiations of the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement. They have ensured both agreements are aligned, and collective efforts are optimised.

The Elected Body and the ACT Government work in partnership to set the priorities and actions under the Focus Areas in the ACT Agreement. Its implementation is staged in four phases, coinciding with the Elected Body elections to allow the incoming Elected Body to work with the ACT Government in setting priorities for the next phase. The implementation schedule is described below:

ACT Agreement implementation phases	
Phase one	February 2019 – June 2022
Phase two	July 2022 – December 2024
Phase three	January 2025 – December 2027
Phase four	January 2028 – December 2028

The ACT Government is committed to presenting an annual statement of performance under both agreements, to monitor implementation and measure impact. This annual statement delivers on this commitment by reporting against outcomes and targets established in the ACT Outcomes Framework (the Outcomes Framework).

The Outcomes Framework, based on the ten focus areas agreed in 2021, comprises a total of 22 targets and aligns with the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement by including outcomes and targets established in the National Agreement:

- > The ACT Government endorsed the four priority reforms of the National Agreement and their alignment with the core focus areas in the ACT Agreement.

Core Focus Areas - ACT Agreement	Priority Reforms - National Closing the Gap Agreement
Community Leadership	Priority Reform 1: Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
Connecting Community	Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector
Cultural Integrity	Priority Reform 3: Transforming government organisations
Inclusive Community	Priority Reform 4: Shared access to data and information at a regional level

- > The Outcomes Framework incorporates the 17 socioeconomic outcomes of the National Agreement. Table 1 in the 'High Level Summary' section of this statement outlines the correlation between ACT outcomes and the National Agreement.

The Outcomes Framework includes additional outcomes and modified targets to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community expectations.

### Additional outcomes and targets:

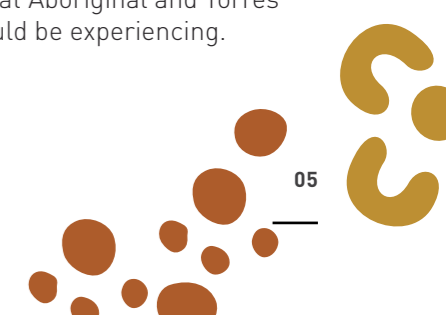
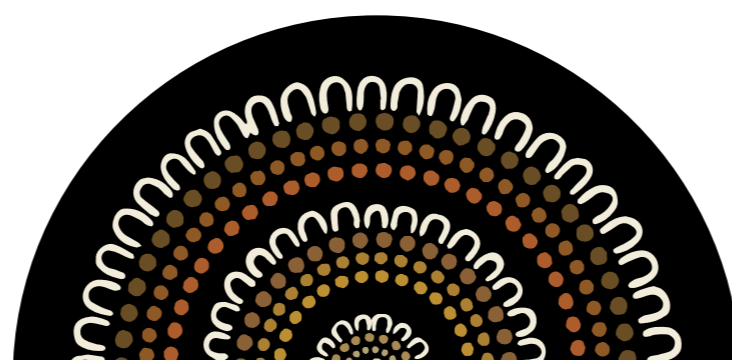
- > ACT outcome 'Wealth is created through growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporate sector' with a target aimed at increasing the number of high value contracts and reporting on wealth creation in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporate sector, has been included (Target 16 under the focus area *Economic Participation*).
- > A target related to digital inclusion has been added to achieve 'Significant and sustained increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in media, in particular community-controlled media' (target 8B, under the focus area *Inclusive Community*).

### Modified targets:

- > National targets relating to early childhood education; youth education, training and employment; adult employment and housing have been changed to 'maintain current parity' or to 'achieve parity' with non-Indigenous Australians by 2031 (targets 1, 14, 15, and 20).
- > Target 21 aimed at reducing the rate of adults held in incarceration has been modified from 'at least 15 per cent' to '30 per cent' by 2031.
- > One national target relating to sea rights has been omitted and is anticipated to be replaced by an inland water target currently being developed by the Partnership Working Group on Closing the Gap.

### The Outcomes Framework integrates additional indicators under certain targets to provide a broader picture of progress in the ACT and to assist in monitoring when data for indicators under National targets are not available.

- > For example, data for the main indicator under Target 19 (suicide rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) is unavailable due to small numbers and privacy concerns. Additional indicators under this target 'total number of mental health overnight bed days' and 'total average length of stay in mental health-related care' provide a proxy on the use of mental health services. These indicators provide, indirectly, a measure of the mental health distress that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could be experiencing.



## About the data in this statement

In line with the ACT Government commitment under the National Agreement, information on performance against targets set in the National Agreement (and shared by the Outcomes Framework) is sourced from the Productivity Commission Dashboard and the Annual Data Compilation Report. Performance against the National Agreement is summarised in **Table 1**. Most of the data in this statement is also publicly available through the Productivity Commission's annual Report on Government Services (ROGS), various Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) publications. Data sources are provided under the figures in section 'Data Insights and Analyses'.

Outcomes state the intended effect of strategies and actions set under the agreements. They capture Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations. Targets state the direction of change required and the means to measure achievement. Indicators related to a target are the means to measure the achievement of a target. This statement provides detailed information on indicators and targets under the ACT Outcomes Framework in the section 'Data Insights and Analyses'.

## Reporting methodology

Data were provided by ACT Government Directorates or extracted from the tables provided in supplementary information on the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Dashboard and other published reports. Data in these tables were used to produce figures shown in the section 'Data Insights and Analyses' including year to year statistics and data disaggregation by sex. Information presented in **Table 1** ('Summary on the progress and status of ACT National Closing the Gap socioeconomic outcomes') was extracted from the Annual Data Compilation Report produced by the Productivity Commission.

## Progress status

Progress status is provided for ACT targets under the National Agreement and is sourced from information available in the Annual Data Compilation Report published by the Productivity Commission in July 2023. The Report provides a high-level description of progress at the national level and for each State and Territory. Progress for each socioeconomic outcome is assessed using data from the baseline year to the latest year.

## Interpreting the data

- > All data reported in this statement is related to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Non-Indigenous data has also been included as a comparative means to assess progress on closing the gap.
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to choose to disclose, or not to disclose, their cultural identity. Data presented here are of people who chose to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- > This statement captures the latest available data for the indicators under each target. For some targets this can be information related to the last calendar year or financial year. However, for others, the latest information can be several years ago, depending on the reports that the information is being drawn from. This is due to the nature of the data cycles for each indicator (including data collection, analysis and reporting).
  - For example, Census data used for housing targets is only available every five years, whilst Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) data is available yearly.
- > The ACT's small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population means that a very small change in the number of people can appear to be a significant change when expressed as a percentage.
  - For example, in the ACT there is a relatively small number of babies born each year. A few more babies born with healthy birthweights in one year can appear to be a much more significant positive change when expressed as a percentage. Equally, a small reduction in the number of healthy birthweight babies can appear to be a more significant negative change when expressed as a percentage. This also explains the great variability from year to year for Target 18 in the focus area *Health and Wellbeing*.
- > For some indicators, data is not published due to small participant numbers and/or to preserve privacy of individuals and families.
  - For example, in the ACT the rate or number of suicides is not published given the sensitivities around data privacy that arise from small numbers. Supplementary indicators on mental health services can act as a proxy of mental health distress and burden in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.
- > Some ACT indicators may not be a precise measurement against targets as some indicators have a high predictive value, while others only measure one aspect of the target and outcome. In addition, some targets cannot be monitored due to a lack of data. The ACT Government is committed to data development to accurately and meaningfully monitor the implementation of the ACT Agreement (including measurement concepts, identification of data sources and mechanisms for data collection).
- > There is currently no data to monitor the implementation of the four core focus areas — *Community Leadership, Connecting Community, Cultural Integrity, and Inclusive Community*. Data development for the monitoring of the four National Priority Reforms is progressing. The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and the Coalition of Peaks are working in partnership to engage an organisation with the expertise to develop the work (including measurement concepts, identification of data sources and mechanisms for data collection) from June 2023. This work will inform the further development of the ACT Outcomes Framework.



# Refinements to the 2023 Impact Statement

The ACT Government is committed to continual improvement in measuring our performance under both the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

This year's Impact Statement provides greater clarity around the alignment and differences between the two agreements by:

- > Outlining the correspondence between the four priority reforms of National Agreement and the core focus areas of the ACT Agreement.
- > Outlining the outcomes, targets and indicators shared between both Agreements (Table 1)
- > Indicating modifications and additional outcomes, performance targets and indicators under the ACT Agreement.
- > Including a summary table on the ACT's progress under the National Agreement.

This year's Impact Statement has also been designed to ensure better data accessibility. It includes:

- > A high-level summary on the ACT's progress against National socioeconomic outcomes.
- > A section on 'Data Insights and Analyses' that presents the latest reported data and year-on-year comparisons as well as visualisation of data trends for performance targets in the Outcomes Framework.
- > Data for non-Indigenous populations to provide a measure on the progress on closing the gap.
- > Data disaggregation by sex where available and relevant.
- > Tables and figures to enable readers to visualise the data.

## High level summary

This section presents a summary on the ACT's progress against the National Agreement on Closing the Gap socioeconomic outcomes. Data is sourced from the Productivity Commission

ACT jurisdictional data under the National Agreement is reported by the Productivity Commission. Data is available for eleven outcomes. Six outcomes have no updates for a range of reasons discussed in the section 'Interpreting the data'.

Data shows that seven outcomes are improving compared to baseline year levels. Of these, six are performing above the national average. Three outcomes have declined whilst one outcome has not changed since the baseline year and is showing a poorer performance compared to the non-Indigenous population and to the national level.

Socioeconomic outcomes in education, childhood and in employment and training showed improvement. These socioeconomic outcomes relate to outcomes under the ACT Agreement Focus Areas *Children and Young People, Lifelong Learning and Economic Participation*.

- > The ACT continues, since 2018 (baseline year), to increase the level of enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Year Before Full time School (YBFS) pre-school programs.
- > The last Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) results show an increase of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are developmentally on track in the ACT, since 2018 (baseline year). While it is an improvement, it does not reverse the gradual decline observed over the past two AEDC censuses (2015 and 2018). This must be considered when looking at the progress of this outcome.
- > A greater number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification. This increase has significantly contributed to narrowing the gap with non-Indigenous students.

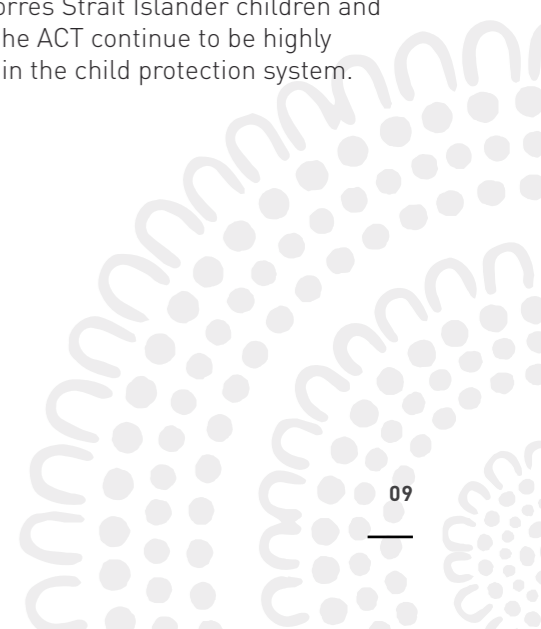
- > The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuing further education pathways leading to the attainment of tertiary qualifications has increased since 2016 (baseline year).
- > A greater number of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were fully engaged in employment, education, or training in the ACT since 2016. Similarly, the proportion of adults employed have increased since 2016.
- > Progress has been made towards reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the justice system.

Socioeconomic outcomes in housing, birthweight of babies and young people's incarceration have worsened. The outcomes relate to ACT Agreement focus areas *Housing, Health and Wellbeing and Justice*.

- > The proportion of Aboriginal people securing appropriate and affordable housing has declined. However, ACT levels for the latest reported year are still above the national levels and above the intended national target.
- > The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children born with a healthy birthweight has been declining since 2017 (baseline year) and ACT levels are below national levels.
- > The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention in the ACT has increased since the baseline year and young people continue to be the most incarcerated.

The socioeconomic outcome related to the overrepresentation of children and young people in the child protection system (related to focus area *Justice and Children and Young People* in the ACT Agreement) has not presented any progress.

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the ACT continue to be highly overrepresented in the child protection system.





**Table 1: Summary on the progress and status of ACT National Closing the Gap socioeconomic outcomes.**

National socioeconomic outcomes (SEO) and targets	ACT Agreement Focus Areas Outcomes	Baseline data and (year)	Latest data and (latest reported year)
<p><b>SEO 1: Aboriginal people enjoy long and healthy lives.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.</p>	Health and Wellbeing <b>Outcome 17</b>	-	-
<p><b>SEO 2: Aboriginal children are born healthy and strong.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.</p>	Health and Wellbeing <b>Outcome 18</b>	88.6% (2017)	87.7% (2020)
<p><b>SEO 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high-quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.</p> <p>This indicator exceeds 100 per cent due to the numerator and denominator being from different sources.</p>	Related to Children and Youth <b>Outcome 1</b>	104.2% (2018)	113% (2022)
<p><b>SEO 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.</p>	Children and Youth <b>Outcome 2</b>	26.4% (2018)	27.3% (2021)
<p><b>SEO 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.</p>	Lifelong learning <b>Outcome 12</b>	77.4 % (2016)	82.1 % (2021)
<p><b>SEO 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.</p>	Lifelong learning <b>Outcome 13</b>	62.1 % (2016)	64.7% (2021)
<p><b>SEO 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent.</p>	Related to Economic Participation <b>Outcome 14</b>	73.7 % (2016)	74.4 % (2021)

National socioeconomic outcomes (SEO) and targets	ACT Agreement Focus Areas Outcomes	Baseline data and (year)	Latest data and (latest reported year)
<p><b>SEO 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal people and communities.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 who are employed to 62 per cent.</p>	Related to Economic Participation <b>Outcome 15</b>	70.1% (2016)	73% (2021)
<p><b>SEO 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent. aged 25-64 who are employed to 62 per cent.</p>	Related to Housing <b>Outcome 20</b>	91.6% (2016)	90.7% (2021)
<p><b>SEO 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are not over-represented in the justice system (per 100,000).</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.</p>	Justice <b>Outcome 21</b>	1703.9 per 100,000 (2019)	1,543.5 per 100,000 (2022)
<p><b>SEO 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not over-represented in the justice system.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.</p>	Justice <b>Outcome 22</b>	15.3 per 10,000 (2018-19)	22.8 per 10,000 on an average day (2021-22)
<p><b>SEO 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not over-represented in the child protection system.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.</p>	Children and Young People <b>Outcome 3</b>	68.5 per 1,000 (2019)	70.8 per 1,000 (2022)
<p><b>SEO 13: Aboriginal families and households are safe.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced by at least 50 per cent, as progress towards zero.</p>	Children and Young People <b>Outcome 4</b>	7.4% (2018-19)	-



National socioeconomic outcomes (SEO) and targets	ACT Agreement Focus Areas Outcomes	Baseline data and (year)	Latest data and (latest reported year)
<p><b>SEO 14: Aboriginal people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> Significant and sustained reduction in suicide rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as progress towards zero.</p>	Health and Wellbeing <b>Outcome 19</b>	-	-
<p><b>SEO 15: Aboriginal people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters.</b></p> <p><b>Target 15A:</b> By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests.</p> <p><b>Target 1B:</b> By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea.</p>	Related to Community Leadership <b>Outcome 10</b>	-	-
<p><b>SEO 16: Aboriginal cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.</p>	Inclusive Community <b>Outcome 7</b>	0 (2018-19)	-
<p><b>SEO 17: Aboriginal people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.</p>	Related to Inclusive Community <b>Outcome 8A and 8B</b>	91.1 % (2014-15)	-

Progress assessments are performed using trend data from the baseline year to the latest year.

Information on progress assessments was taken from the Annual Data Compilation Report published by the Productivity Commission.

**Table key:**

green: improvement since baseline year

red: deteriorated since baseline year

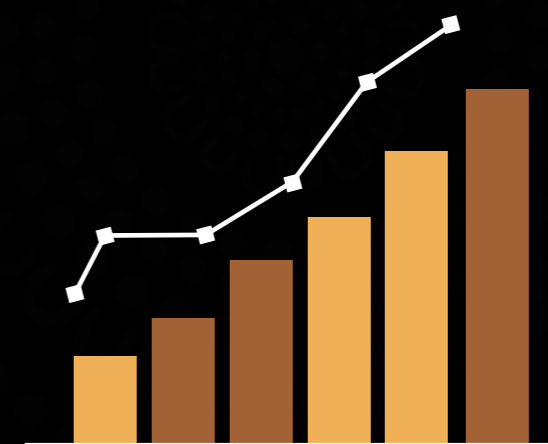
grey no significant change since baseline year

- no data available for the ACT

'Related to' indicates that the target has been modified in the ACT Outcomes Framework.



## Data insights and analyses





ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Children and Young People

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people growing up safely in their families and communities.*

The ACT continues to ensure high levels of enrolments in early education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The ACT Government continues to implement the 10-year plan for early childhood education *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*, and ensure access to quality early childhood education for all children. A key component of this is providing two days per week, 48 weeks per year, of quality early education for up to 500 priority three-year-olds (those experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage) and up to 100 additional places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander three-year-olds in Koori Preschool. Free three-year-old preschool will also be available to all ACT families for one day per week (300 hours per year) from the start of 2024.

The Koori Preschool Co-design, a key deliverable of the *Set Up for Success* early childhood strategy, was completed over the 2022-2023 reporting period. Consistent with the commitment to self-determination in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028, the objective was to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Canberra and Wreck Bay to co-design the evolution of a Koori Preschool Program that meets the community's needs now and into the future, particularly around cultural safety and integrity. A co-design consultation process engaged more than 170 stakeholders through face to face and online interviews, tailored surveys, and community events to identify 'what matters to Mob'.

On 3 November 2022, the Education Directorate launched resources developed through the Koori Preschool Co-design including the Koori Preschool Cultural Safety Framework, Koori Preschool Curriculum, 'About Koori Preschool' children's book, and a Koori Preschool promotional video. The schools implementing Koori Preschool are Kingsford Smith School, Ngunnawal Primary School, Wanniasa School, Narrabundah Early Childhood School and Richardson Primary School. In 2024, Koori Preschool will expand in Richardson Primary School, Narrabundah Early Childhood School and Ngunnawal Primary School. This means an additional 66 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will have access to Koori Preschool in 2024.

To ensure children are developmentally on track and transition effectively from early childhood education and care to school, ACT Directorates are developing a cross-sector approach based on strong collaborative relationships, best practice, and a formal process for sharing information about children's learning and development across different settings. In their first year of Primary School, children are offered a Kindergarten Health Check. The aim of this free, cross-directorate program is to identify potential health issues associated with vision, hearing, height, weight, and development. Early intervention and appropriate referral/s to specialists, as a result of the Health Check, may optimise a child's learning, social development and general health outcomes.

The Child Development Service forms part of a well-established referral network and is one of the biggest referrers into the Education Directorate's three-year-old preschool initiative. The intended outcome of the Child Development Service expansion is to provide effective interventions under Best Start to improve Australian Early Development Census results.

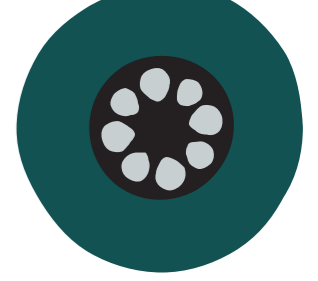
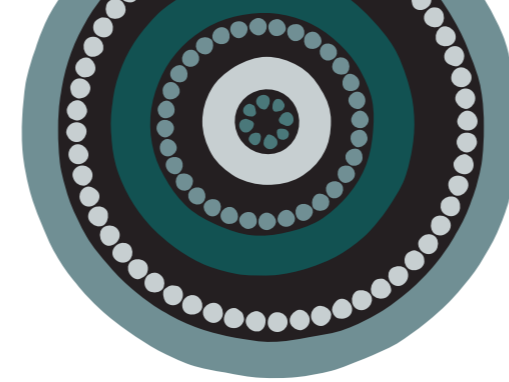
In November 2022, the ACT Government launched the Best Start for Canberra's Children: *The First 1000 Days Strategy (Best Start)*. Best Start is inclusive of all families raising and caring for children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. Best Start aims to bring together government and our community partners, to provide early support services for children and families. A first action of Best Start was the expansion of the Child Development Service, to provide critical speech, occupation and physiotherapies, or a combination of these therapies, to children aged 24 to 36 months, with a priority focus for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system is still very high and while there has been an increase in the proportion of children reunited with their family, the rate of children entering Out-of-Home Care is above the rate of children exiting in the child protection system. The ACT Government continues to implement the recommendations from *Our Booris, Our Way* review. The *Our Booris Our Way* review made a number of recommendations to the ACT Government on systemic improvements needed to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. Recommendations focused on three broad areas: reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system, improving the experience of children and young people whilst in care, and increasing pathways for restoration to parents, kin and culture.

In the last 12 months the ACT Government has worked with the *Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee* to:

- > Review the *Children and Young People Act 2008* to incorporate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.
  - In October 2022, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) delivered two reports: '*Embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle in the Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT): Final Report*' and '*Supplementary paper: Defining Kinship Carers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in the ACT*'. The final report contains 21 recommendations developed after extensive consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
  - Legislative amendments in 2023 to the *Children and Young People Act 2008* will enshrine a strong legislated standard that the child placement principle must be considered when determining the best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
  - In this first stage of legislative amendments the five elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle – prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection will be inserted into the legislation. Further amendments will also be made in stage two to support the work to embed the child placement principle in legislation in the ACT.
- > Pass the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner Bill* in November 2022. An interim advocate has been in place since November 2022 while a national recruitment process is underway. The Commissioner will provide advocacy and advice on systemic and individual cases.
- > Establish a First Nations Family Support Team. This experienced and dedicated team is working with families to keep children safe and connected to culture and community. The team are developing a new practice framework led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.



- > Strengthen the support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship carers by completing the recruitment of a First Nations Kinship Liaison Officer. This officer is providing targeted and culturally informed support for kinship carers, regardless of where they are in their caring journey.
- > Commence a Care and Protection Legal Advocacy Service in 2023. Provided by the Aboriginal Legal Service, it provides culturally appropriate legal and advocacy services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families coming into contact with the ACT's child protection system.
- > Release a Charter for Parents and Families. The Charter sets out a shared understanding between families and child protection staff, and what everyone can expect when working together. This will support positive and respectful ways of working together to enable the best outcomes for children and young people and their families.
- > Improve information on the ACT Government website specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship carers. Sharing information on what it means to become a kinship carer and the supports available to kinship carers.

Additional activities include comprehensive staff training on culturally led practice, policy and practice reviews to embed the child placement principle and the provision of monthly and quarterly data about the child and youth protection system.

In January 2023, the Community Services Directorate (CSD) established the Aboriginal Services Branch, which facilitates the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in response to *Our Booris, Our Way, We Don't Shoot Our Wounded and the ACT Housing Strategy*. The Aboriginal Services Branch will work with community to build the sector to deliver high quality services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

A first action of the branch was to provide funding to Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation in response to the call for a specialised Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.

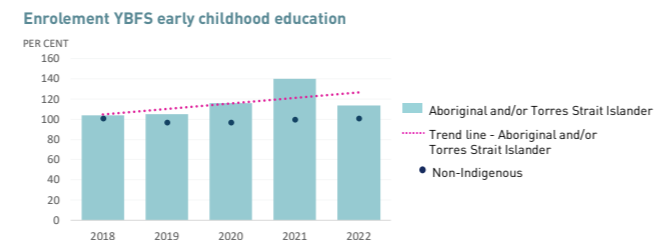
The Aboriginal Services Branch also supports the work of Next Steps for Our Kids to remedy the unacceptable overrepresentation of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out of home care. A key focus will be the appointment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner.

**Outcome 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.**

**Target 1.** Maintain parity between the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children enrolled in Year Before Full-time Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education.

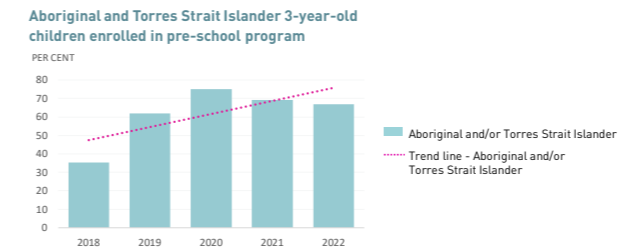
- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full-time Schooling (YBFS) preschool program.
  - In 2022, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in preschool programs was 113.7%, a decrease from 139.9% in 2021. However, this is an increase from 104.2% since 2018 (baseline).



Source: [table CtG3A.1](#) (Productivity Commission). Derived from ABS (unpublished) *Preschool Education Australia, 2022*.

This indicator exceeds 100 per cent due to the numerator and denominator being from different sources.

- > Enrolments of 3-year-old children in a preschool program.
  - In 2022, 67 % of eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 3-year-old children were enrolled in a pre-school program. This represents an increase from 35.2% since the 2018 school year (baseline).
  - The 2022 data is a decline from 75.1% of eligible children enrolled in 2020. This change corresponds to a fluctuation of a relatively small number of children enrolled in 2020 compared to 2022 (from 130 to 124, respectively).

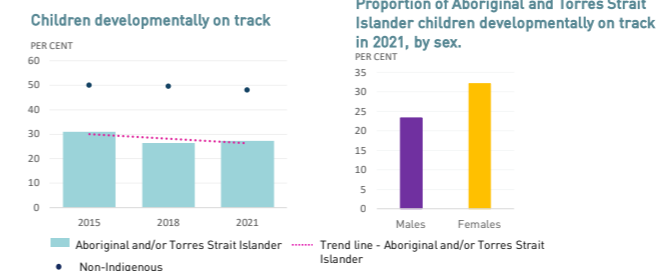


Source: ACT Education Directorate

**Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.**

**Target 2.** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census to 55 per cent.

- > Proportion of young children developmentally on track.
  - In 2021, 27.3 % of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were developmentally on track on the five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). This represents an increase from 26.4 % since 2018 (baseline).
  - The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children persists with 48% of non-Indigenous children reported as being developmentally on track in 2021.



Source: [table CtG4A.1 and CtG4A.3](#) (Productivity Commission). Derived from Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment *Australian Early Development Census 2021*. The AEDC is a national assessment conducted every 3 years to examine how children have developed by the time they start school. Data for 2015 was included to report on more than two data points. The baseline year for the ACT is 2018

- > Children assessed at the lowest risk category in the ACT Kindy Health Check Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

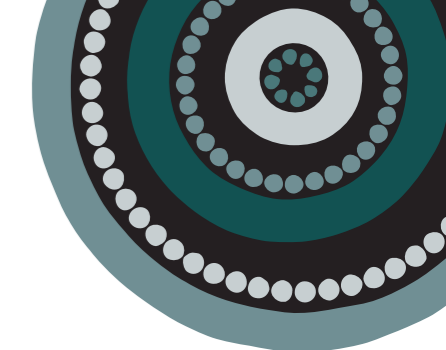
*This questionnaire measures parent/guardian assessment of their child's social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing at the start of Kindergarten (currently the first formal year of education in the ACT).*

- In 2022, 65.3 % of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who undertook the Kindy Health Check were at the lowest risk category. This represents a decrease from 73.7% in 2021 and 75.2% in 2020.

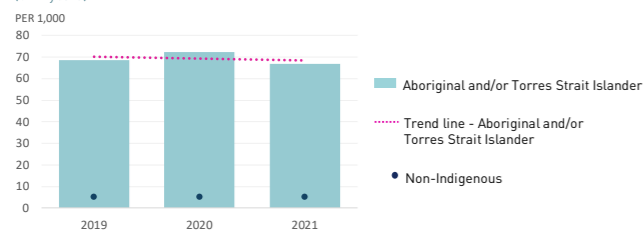
**Outcome 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are not overrepresented in the child protection system.**

**Target 3.** By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

- > Proportion of children and young people in Out-of-Home Care.
  - In 2021-2022, 216 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were in Out-of-Home Care which represented 31% of all children (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) in Out-of-Home Care.
  - This also represents a rate of 70.8 per 1,000 children for the ACT. This represents an increase since 2019 (baseline) when the rate was 68.5 per 1,000 children.
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 14.3 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be in out-of-home care in the ACT.
  - The over-representation of children in the ACT protection system is well above the national level (56.8 per 1,000).



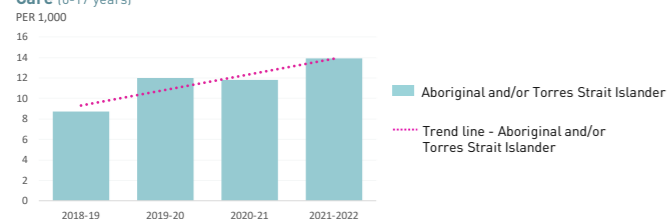
**Children and young people in Out-of-Home Care**  
(0-17 years)



Source: [table S5.1 and S5.2](#) (Productivity Commission). From *Child Protection Australia 2021-2022*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2022.

- > Proportion of children and young people entering and exiting Out-Of-Home care
  - In 2021-22, 42 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entered Out-of-Home Care (29 % of 144 children entering Out-of-Home Care). This corresponds to a rate of admission of 13.9 per 1,000 and is almost 13 times the rate of admission for non-Indigenous children and young people.
  - In 2021-22, 36 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people exited Out-of-Home Care (representing 25% of all children exited Out-of-Home Care). This corresponds to a rate of discharge from Out-of-Home Care of 11.9 per 1,000.

**Children and young people entering Out-of-Home Care**  
(0-17 years)



Source: [table S5.1 and S5.2](#) (Productivity Commission). From *Child Protection Australia 2021-2022*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2022.

- > Proportion of children and young people who were reunified during the reporting period.
  - Data is unavailable for the financial year 2021-22.

- In 2020-21, 29 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (out of a total of 87) were reunified (not under long-term, finalised care and protection orders). This represents 33 % of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in the year 2020-21 and an increase from 11 % of children reunified in 2019-20.

- > Proportion of children and young people reunified/restored to birth parents in the financial year and did not return to Out-of-Home Care within 12 months.
  - Data is unavailable for the financial year 2021-22 and 2020-21.
  - In 2019-20, less than 5 children who were reunified in the previous year, did not return to out-of-home care within 12 months post-reunification.

**Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.**

**Target 4.** By 2031, reduce by 50% at least as progress towards zero, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years and over who experienced domestic physical or threatened physical harm.

*No new ACT data is available for this indicator since baseline year (2018-19).*

- > Proportion people needing crisis support in relation to domestic and family violence.

*Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) comprises crisis intervention and legal support services. Data for this indicator is collected every six months (July-December and January-June). Data cannot be added up for each financial year due to client overlap as some of the same clients may be supported for extended periods of time that cross over the reporting periods.*

**Crisis intervention**

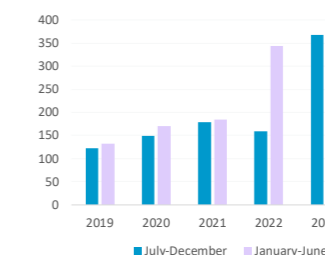
- > In 2023, 368 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presented to DVCS for crisis intervention support in the first reporting period and 249 in the second reporting period, representing respectively 8.7% and 15.6% of all people presenting to DVCS for this service.
- > In 2019 (baseline year), the number for both reporting periods was 123 and 132, representing 4% and 5.26 %, respectively.

**Legal support**

- > In 2023, 38 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needed legal support in the first reporting period and 50 in the second reporting period. This represents 8.3% and 11.3%, respectively, of all people presenting to this service.
- > In 2019 (baseline year), the number for both reporting period was 30 and 29 representing 8% and 9%, respectively.

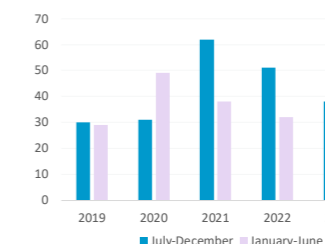
**Crisis intervention**

**Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needing crisis intervention support**



**Court Advocacy Program**

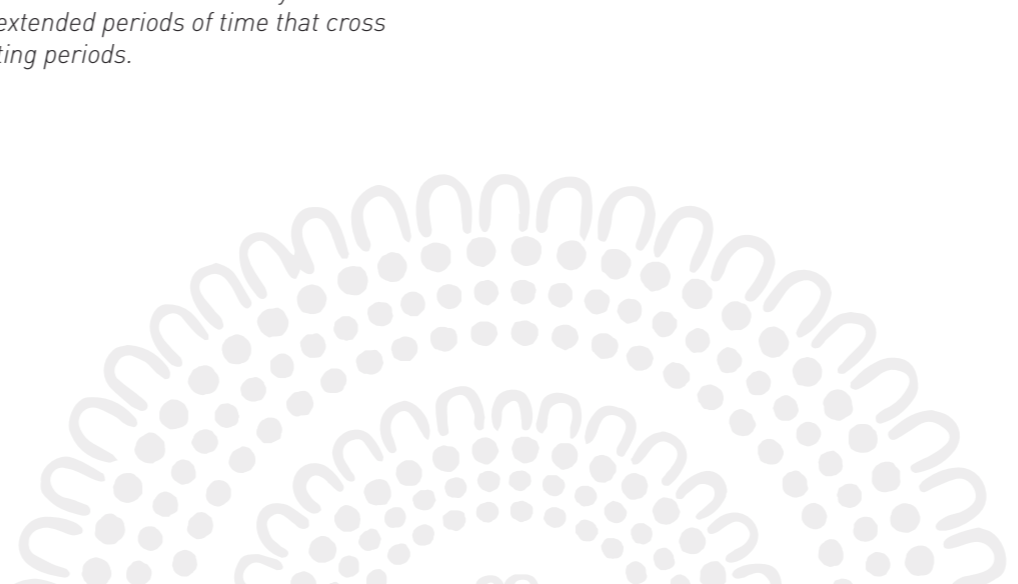
**Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needing legal support**



Source: *Community Services Directorate. Please be aware that caution should be taken when interpreting the data movement given the small population in the ACT.*

Proportion of people homeless or at risk of homelessness citing domestic and family violence as a reason, in a financial year.

*No data available for this indicator.*





ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Cultural Integrity

*A society that supports the aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and contributes to the building of respectful, fair and sustainable communities.*

The scope of this focus area aligns with priority reform three 'Transforming government organisations'. For more information refer to the ACT 2023 Annual Report on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap section.

The ACT Government is focussed on ensuring government agencies and the services they provide are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Homelessness services

In 2022, the Community Services Directorate held a series of engagement activities with homelessness service providers, individuals with a lived experience and other key stakeholders to plan and design future homelessness services in the ACT. Included in these consultations were specific engagements with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that sought to gain insight into the unique challenges facing First Nations people and to foster a more inclusive and culturally sensitive response.

### Mental health commissioning

The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is engaging in a collaborative commissioning approach to design the future provision of health services delivered by ACT Government funded non-government organisations (NGOs) in the community. The Mental Health Commissioning Process, led by Mental Health Policy and Strategy (MHPS), aims to promote a mental health system that can support recovery focussed, integrated, holistic, and outcomes driven services for Canberrans.

The mental health commissioning process, in line with other ACT Government commissioning subsectors, recognises that as a result of intergenerational trauma, ongoing impacts of colonisation and social and economic disadvantage, increased morbidity, mortality and disability, reduced social supports as well as racism and discrimination, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are often at an increased risk of developing mental illness.

### Draft northside clinical services plan

The Northside Clinical Services Plan is a key action in the ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030 (ACTHSP) and will inform infrastructure planning on the northside of Canberra including the northside hospital planning.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as a priority population group in the draft plan that uses Australian National Census data to underpin services planning.

ACTHD has internally commissioned development of a demographic data review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT and Region. Select data from this report has been presented to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, and work continues to bring the data to broader community attention in appropriate ways.

### Strengthening partnerships – Investing for social impact (commissioning framework)

The Community Services (CSD) and ACT Health (ACTHD) directorates are leading the transition to Commissioning for Outcomes for the services they fund and deliver. Commissioning aims to change the way government and the non-government organisation (NGO) sector partner to provide community and health services that support Canberrans. Commissioning involves government and the NGO sector working closely together, and with community members with lived experience, to design and deliver services which better meet community need and enable people to achieve the outcomes that they want for themselves and their families.

Self-determination and equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a key priority for commissioning. There is strong alignment between commissioning and First Nations engagement principles, in particular a focus on close partnerships, trust and relational approaches which move away from traditional power dynamics between government, the NGO sector and community members. Through commissioning we seek to better enable discussions between diverse parties and take the time to understand perspectives, enable truth telling and support community-led solutions.

### Procurement

In 2022, the ACT Government delivered on a commitment under the National Agreement by conducting a whole of government review of expenditure on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and activities (the Expenditure Review), to provide better information that may inform future resource allocation decisions.

Among other findings, the Expenditure Review demonstrated that the government's work under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP), including efforts to increase the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers for large building projects, is having a real impact. Procurement expenditure directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers more than doubled between 2019-20 (\$7.8 million) and 2020-21 (\$18.4 million).

As part of the implementation of the Government's Procurement Reform Program, a review of the ATSIPP will commence in the 2023-24 financial year. The terms of reference to support the review are being considered and will include opportunities to consider ways to enhance the operation to continue to meet the objectives of the policy.

The review and actions under the reform program will not disrupt the current policy and its operation which will continue to ensure the ACT Government can maximise opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises.

**Outcome 5: Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.**

**Target 5.** By 2031, reduce experiences of racism and discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within government systems by at least 80 per cent as progress towards zero.

*No data is available for this outcome.*

ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Inclusive Community

*A self-determined and inclusive society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued, respected, and experience a life free of racism and systemic discrimination.*

The scope of this focus area aligns with priority reform four 'Shared access to data and information at a regional level'. For more information refer to the ACT 2023 Annual Report on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap section.

The ACT Government is working to strengthen ways to share data and information through this *Annual Impact Statement*, supporting the community to identify and monitor priorities under the ACT Agreement. Work is currently underway to ensure that the Elected Body and community are able to access the information and data they require to hold ACT Government directorates accountable for delivering the outcomes in the agreements.

Accompanying this *Annual Impact Statement* is an online dashboard which is updated twice a year. Whilst the *Annual Impact Statement* is a point-in-time report the online dashboard contains more information than the *Impact Statement* including multiple years of ACT data on each metric for the years between baseline and current year data. The dashboard is a useful reference for those requiring more detailed knowledge of data including data movements over a number of years.

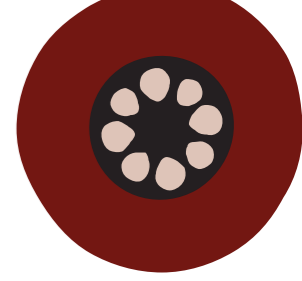
You can access the online dashboard at: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/agreement-2019-2028/impact-statement](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/agreement-2019-2028/impact-statement)

### Indigenous health data sovereignty and governance

ACT Health has engaged the Australian National University and Maiam Nayri Wingara to implement Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance (IDS-G within ACTHD) and with ACT and Region First Nations Communities. An initial focus (Phase 1) on implementation of IDS principles and establishing IDG mechanisms will build knowledge and awareness supporting later (Phase 2) implementation of IDS. Activities for Phase 1, initiated in 2022-23, include:

- > socialising the concepts of IDG and IDS within ACTHD through education and capability building;
- > socialising the concepts of IDG and IDS with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in the ACT through a series of community engagement workshops;
- > assisting ACT Health to develop IDG policies and procedures for an IDG governance structure; and
- > evaluating and monitoring systems change with the implementation of IDS principles and IDG mechanisms.

The IDS-G project will also implement relevant ACT Government commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028.



**Outcome 6:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

**Target 6.** Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.

*No data is available for this outcome.*

**Outcome 7:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.

**Target 7.** By 2031, there is a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.

- > Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken and number of strong languages spoken
  - No new ACT data for this indicator since baseline year (2015), with the 2020 survey providing no data for the ACT.
- > Number of initiatives implemented to enable the revitalisation of languages of the Canberra region.

*No data available for this outcome.*

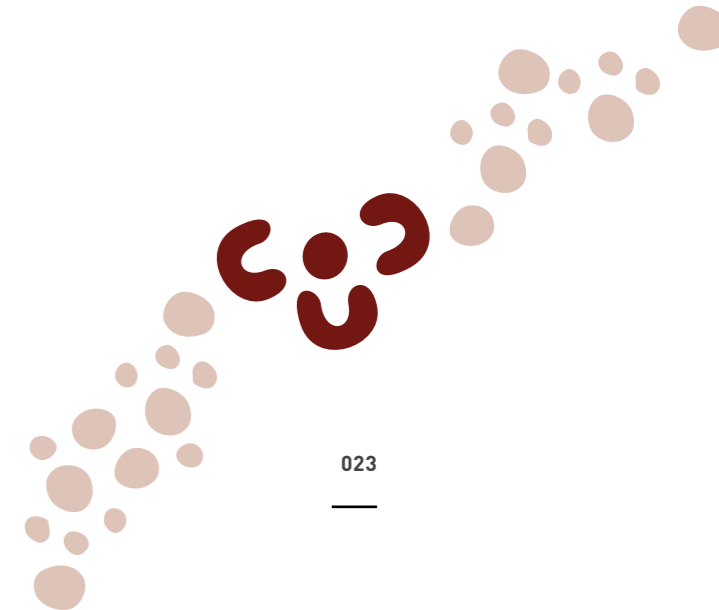
**Outcome 8:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.

**Target 8A.** By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.

*No data available for this outcome.*

**Target 8B.** Significant and sustained increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the media, in particular community-controlled media.

*No data available for this outcome.*



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Community Leadership

*A self-determined and inclusive society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued, respected, and experience a life free of racism and systemic discrimination.*

The scope of this focus area aligns with priority reform one 'Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making'. For more information refer to the ACT 2023 Annual Report on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap section.

The ACT Government continues to promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, knowledge, and culture in decision making including through existing partnership arrangements with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, the Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee, the ACT Reconciliation Council, and the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elected body

The ACT Government benefits from 15 years working in formal partnership with the democratic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (Elected Body). The Elected Body was established in 2008 to enable the full diversity of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to have a strong, democratically elected voice to government. This was done in partnership with the previous ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Council, which provided advice to and worked in partnership with the ACT Government.

### United Ngunnawal Elders Council

The United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) is a Traditional Owner representative body, providing advice to the ACT Government in relation to heritage and connection to land matters for the Ngunnawal people. UNEC also provides advice to the Elected Body in accordance with section 9 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008.

### Healing and reconciliation fund

The ACT Government has fully funded a \$20 million healing and reconciliation fund to support community priorities over the next decade. The development of an appropriate governance structure for the healing and reconciliation fund is ongoing and will continue to be progressed throughout the 2023-24 financial year.

### Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee

The Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC) is a strong partnership that continues to be actively engaged in the work of EPSDD with engagement across all areas of the portfolio. The DNCCC's engagement in environmental and sustainable activities empowers self-determination for Ngunnawal people in speaking for country to ensure Ngunnawal cultural values, knowledge and aspirations have a distinct role in the natural and built environments of the ACT, as part of their responsibility for the care and management of country.

### Advisory bodies across government

The ACT Government also consults with a range of internally administered advisory groups with specific policy expertise or interest, including the Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee, the Justice Advisory Group and Justice Caucus, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Reference Group at Canberra Health Services, and the ACT Reconciliation Council, who act as community leaders for reconciliation and promote the ACT's nation leading Reconciliation Day public holiday.

### Outcome 9. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

**Target 9.** There will be formal partnership arrangements between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments in each state and territory, enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities to support Closing the Gap targets. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will choose their own representatives.

*No data is available for this outcome.*

### Outcome 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical, and economic relationship with their land and waters.

**Target 10A:** By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests.

*No data available for this indicator.*

**Target 10B:** Increasing role in decision-making on park and reserves which make up 70 per cent of the ACT land mass.

- > Number of joint decisions implemented in parks and reserves.
  - In 2021-2022, there were five joint decisions in matters related to: the Jarramlee Remediation Project; Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Functional Review; Restoration of Native Plants (Namadgi); Endorsement of the Jerrabomberra Creek Catchment Plan; and Cultural Resource Management Plan..



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Connecting Community

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are connected to strong families, social and support networks building upon the foundation of community leadership.*

The scope of this focus area aligns with priority reform two 'Building the community-controlled sector'. For more information refer to the ACT 2023 Annual Report on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap section.

As a small jurisdiction, the ACT has only a small number of existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) across a limited set of sectors. As well as investing in significant infrastructure improvements and service expansions for existing ACCOs, the ACT Government is focussed on supporting the community to establish new organisations in sectors where there are no ACCOs currently delivering services.

Two specific areas of focus are the creation of a community-controlled housing organisation and a community-controlled service focusing on children, young people, and families.

This year, the ACT Government established the Aboriginal Service Development (ASD) Branch within the community services directorate.

ASD's key focus is to support the development and enhancement of established, new and emerging ACCOs across the ACT region to deliver human services. ASD will also provide high-level strategic policy development and service design. The branch aims to embed a genuine partnership approach and relationship between the ACT Government and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and human services sector.

**Outcome 11: There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.**

**Target 11.** Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.

*No data is available for this outcome.*

ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Lifelong learning

*Respect is given to preserving the world's oldest living culture which enhances inclusion and empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to fully engage in lifelong learning and positive generational experiences.*

The ACT Government, through the ACT education directorate, supports student's aspirations and engagement by delivering a suite of programs and scholarships.

- > Waruga Yardhura is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Engagement Program. Over the past year the program continued to provide case management for up to 30 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in years 1-10 who had not been attending or engaging a school. A Community Reference Group comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partners provides ongoing review and feedback for the program.
- > Tertiary scholarships of up to \$10,000 per annum for three years by application annually for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking a teaching qualification at an ACT-based university, as well as one-off scholarships in any discipline, as part of a transition to a new scholarships program model. In 2022-23, four scholarships were awarded – two to teaching students and two one-off scholarships to students undertaking tertiary courses in a different discipline.
- > Secondary scholarships of up to \$4,000 are available annually by application, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students to support Year 12 completion and pathways to further education and training.
- > The Mura Awards provide bursaries of \$400 to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in key transitions years who demonstrate high engagement with learning, leadership within their school community or improved achievement.

ACT Government directorates are working collaboratively to:

- > Increase community awareness of post-school pathways and lifelong learning opportunities available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.
- > Develop, implement, and promote quality pathways to tertiary qualifications. For example, by connecting schools to industry partners and by working with City Renewal Authority to deliver a First Nations Work Experience Program.

Apprenticeships and traineeships combine paid work with study towards a nationally recognised qualification. Subsidised apprenticeships and traineeships are available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the ACT User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) and Skilled Capital programs. Both programs provide an additional loading of \$500 for each government-funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentice or trainee to assist registered training organisations (RTOs) in providing inclusive and positive learning experiences.

The Skilled Capital program is designed for students who do not have an employer to support them in their training. These students might be young or unemployed and are seeking skills to gain employment and/or are trying to reskill to join a new industry. Research has demonstrated the ACT User Choice program is highly effective in producing positive

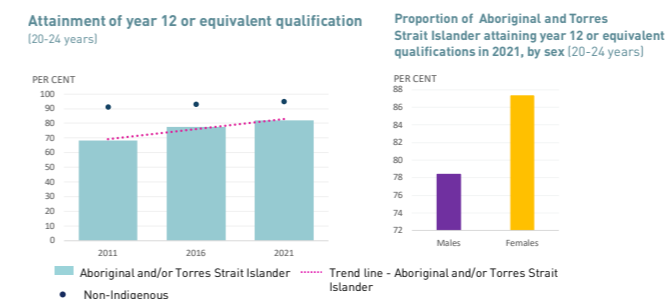
<sup>1</sup>Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and study outcomes: The effectiveness of the Australian Apprenticeships program. A report prepared by Skills Canberra and presented to the Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body in November 2020.

employment and further study outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices, and trainees<sup>1</sup>.

### Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.

**Target 12.** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (aged 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.

- > Proportion of young people completing year 12 or equivalent qualification.
  - In 2021, 82.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 years old have attained year 12 or equivalent.
  - This is an increase of almost 5% since 2016 and it is above the national level which is 68.1%.
  - There is a significant narrowing of the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous students, from 15.5% in 2016 (the baseline year) to 12.7% in 2021.
  - However, the proportion of males attaining this level of qualification is almost 9 % lower than for females.



Source: [table CtG5A.1 and CtG5A.2](#) (Productivity Commission). Derived from ABS (unpublished) Census of Population and Housing.

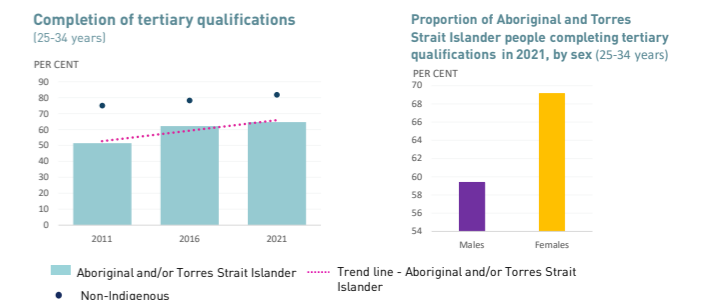
- > Number of students attaining a senior secondary certificate each year.
  - In 2022, 89 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved senior secondary certificates.
  - This is a decrease by 1 individual from 2021 but remains a 27% increase since 2018 (baseline year) when 70 students achieved senior certificates.
- > Number students completing a VET qualification at year 12 or equivalent each year.

- In 2022, 335 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completed a VET qualification at year 12 or equivalent level. This is 1.5 times more than the number of students in 2020 (277 students) and 3.5 times more than in 2021 (95 students). This is also an increase from 298 students in 2018 (baseline year).

### Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways.

**Target 13.** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above)
  - In 2021, 64.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years old had completed non-school qualifications of Certificate III or above in the ACT.
  - This is an increase from 62.1 % since 2016 and is above the national level (47%).
  - In 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females showed a higher attainment rate (69.1 %) compared to males (59.4 %).



Source: [table CtG5A.1 and CtG5A.2](#) (Productivity Commission). Derived from ABS (unpublished) Census of Population and Housing.

- > The number of students completing a VET qualification at Certificate III and above level.
  - In 2022, 78 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (8.63 % of all students) completed a VET qualification at Certificate II level or above. This is an increase from 37 students in 2021 but remains below the levels in 2018 baseline year (95 students).



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Economic Participation

*Equality of access to employment and growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and community services organisations which drives economic development across community.*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT are increasingly engaged in employment and job-focused training pathways. The ACT Government is committed to continue efforts in achieving set targets. For this, ACT Directorates are continuously monitoring the uptake and breadth of Australian School-based apprenticeship opportunities for school students to inform policies and traineeships programs. This work includes reviewing the subsidy loadings for traineeships and apprenticeships. The ACT Government acknowledges the responsibility of the ACT Public Service in promoting and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's and businesses' economic participation and wealth creation. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy supports the objectives of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028, with a focus on employment and economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Canberra Region. A whole-of-government approach includes actions directed to:

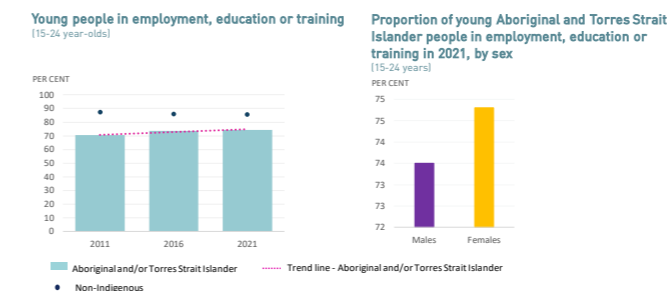
- > Maximise opportunities to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with the ACT Public Service workforce, to achieve the employment target of having 3% by 2026 (currently 2.13 %) of staff from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.
- > Maintain the Canberra region Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberra Region Enterprise list, which currently covers 341 certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business.
- > Encourages territory officers to seek quotes from certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises, wherever possible, driving growth in economic participation for these businesses through ACT Government procurement spend.
- > Provide information sessions, guidance and engagement opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that may wish to tender for territory procurements.
- > Conduct meet-the-supplier event pilots to provide a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to showcase their goods and service to ACT Government buyers.
- > Improve key entry level programs that actively seek to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.
- > Development programs to support the career trajectory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- > Enhance support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- > Develop and implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness activities.
- > Enhance inclusion across ACT Public Service workplace cultures, to achieve the target of 80% by 2026 (currently 69% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents) of staff agreeing that their workplace is inclusive.

- > Review, in consultation the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the ACT Public Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy in the context of the Government Procurement (Charter of Procurement Values) Direction 2020.

### Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education.

**Target 14.** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australian youth.

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth engaged in employment or education.
  - In 2021, 74.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged 15-24 years were fully engaged in employment, education or training in the ACT.
  - This is a slight increase from 73.7 % in 2016 (baseline year) and is above the national level (58 %).
  - This compares to 85.6 % of non-Indigenous people.
  - The gap between Indigenous and non-indigenous people has narrowed slightly, from 12.4% in 2016 (the baseline year) to 11.2% in 2021.



Source: [table CtG7A.1](#) (Productivity Commission). Derived from ABS (unpublished) Census of Population and Housing.

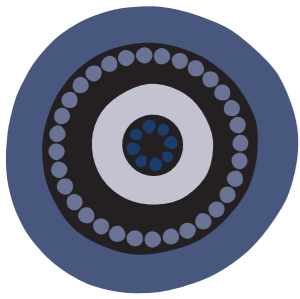
- > Number of students aged 15-24 enrolled in VET and public schools.
  - In 2022, there were a total of 1475 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolled in VET and public schools. 780 were enrolled in VET and 695 were enrolled in public schools. This number is an increase since 2018 (baseline) when a total of 1139 students were enrolled.
- > Proportion of all people aged 15-24 years employed in the ACT by the Australian Public Service.
  - In 2022, the total number of young people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) employed in both public services were 5,485.
  - In 2022, the number of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across both public services was 260, accounting for 4.74 % of young people in the ACT employed in public service.
  - In 2022, the number of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employed in the ACT Public Service was 80 (or 4.3 %) and in the Australian Public Services was 180 (or 5%).

Source: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD). Derived from the Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED).

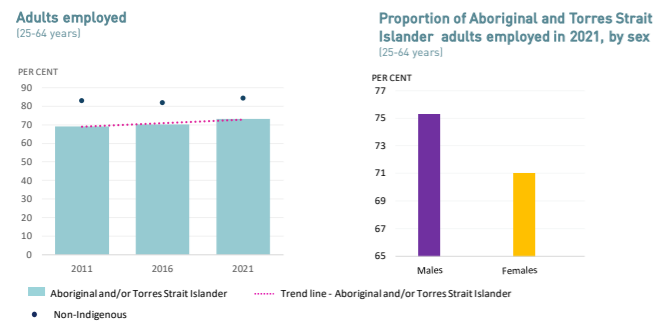
### Outcome 15: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

**Target 15.** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 – 64 years employed to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australians.

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged 25-64 employed.



- In 2021, 73.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged 25-64 years were fully engaged in employment, education or training in the ACT. This compares to 84.2 % of non-Indigenous people.
- Nationally, 55.7% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were fully engaged in employment, education or training.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females are slightly underemployed compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males.



Source: table CtG8A.1 and CtG8.2 (Productivity Commission). Derived from ABS (unpublished) Census of Population and Housing.

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged 25-64 employed in the ACT by the Public Service

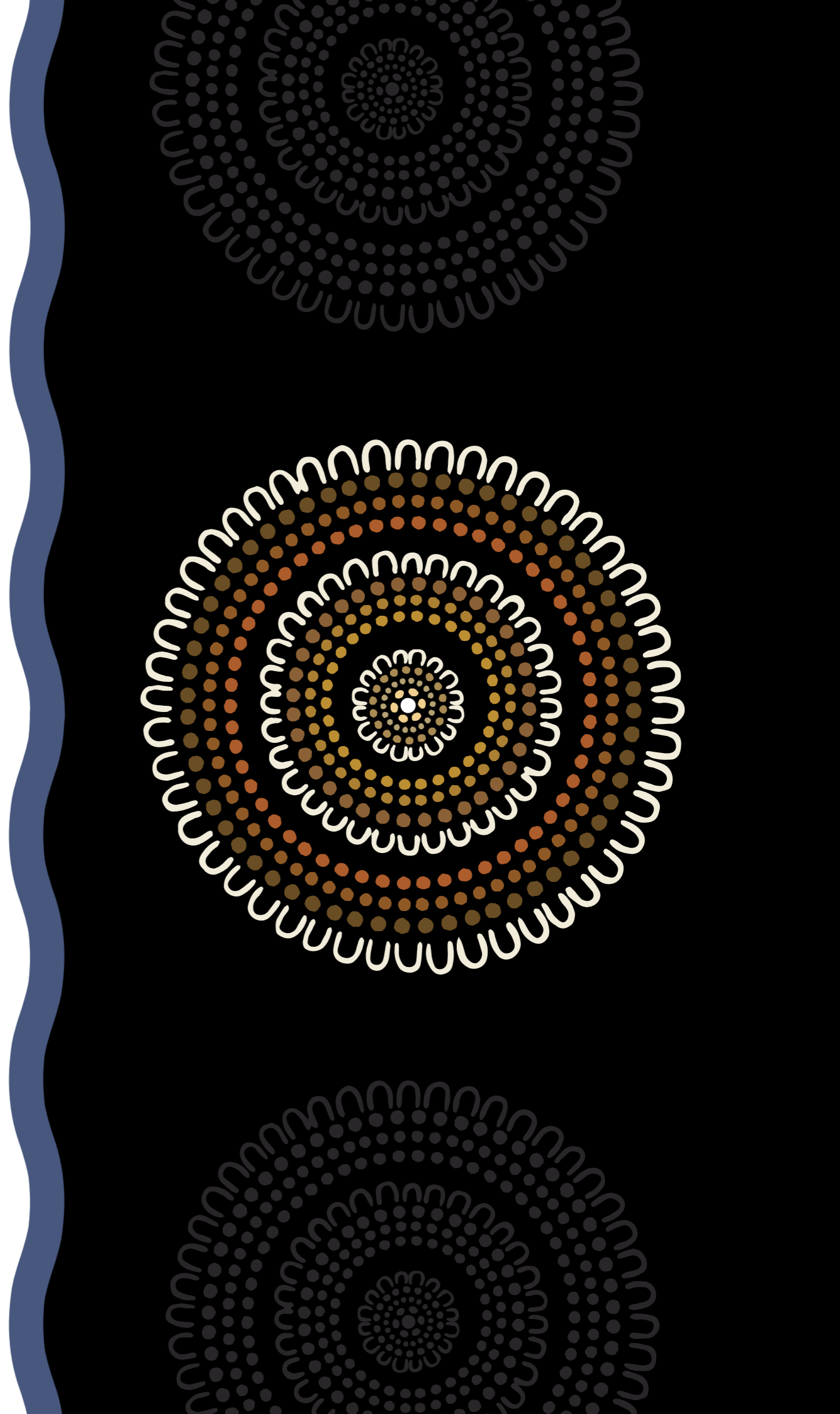
In 2022:

- A total of 80,695 people aged 25-64 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) were employed across both public services.
- The ACT Public Service employed 24,416 people. Of these, 461 (or 1.9 %) were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The Australian Public Service employed 56, 279 people in the ACT. Of these, 1260 (or 2.2 %) were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Outcome 16: Wealth is created through growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporate sector.**

**Target 16.** Increase the proportion of high value contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

- > Percentage of the financial year's addressable spend spent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises and number of these enterprises.
  - In the financial year 2021-2022, 2.76% of financial year's addressable spend was spent on 102 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises. This is an increase since 2021-2022 when 90 enterprises were attributed to 2.00% of addressable spend.



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Health and Wellbeing

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equity in health and wellbeing outcomes.*

A whole-of-government approach for the current implementation phase under this focus area is underpinned by the principle of self-determination and provision of culturally safe health care services and programs. The ACT health directorate, in collaboration with Canberra Health Care Services, the community services directorate and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate is working towards:

- > Strengthening evidence-based program and health services by improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health data and research. This includes data integration work that will improve the reliability, validity and consistency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing statistics.
- > Establish appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data governance mechanisms to ensure that appropriate data sovereignty principles are implemented. Maiam Nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty collective has been engaged to provide advice, guidance and capability in this area.
- > Building culturally safe and accessible mainstream services. This will be achieved by building a greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the broader ACT Health workforce, by facilitating direct involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and voices in the design of health services and solutions and by providing cultural competency and integrity training to non-Indigenous staff.

The ACT government is committed to work towards equity in health and wellbeing. Some of the work currently taking place includes:

- > The development of ACT Disability Health Strategy and a Cultural Integrity Framework
- > A stand-alone pilot for Suicide Prevention Postvention and Aftercare Service in the ACT
- > The expansion of midwifery-led and midwifery-coordinated continuity of care models, Birthing in Country model and Homebirth model of care (goals under the Maternity in Focus: *First Action Plan 2022-2025*).

### Mental health and suicide prevention

In 2021-2022, the ACT Government approved a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention, Service, with the aim of helping to reduce suicide, and the impacts of suicide within the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This service has been commissioned and co-designed with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The service provider for the service is Thirrili, a lead Aboriginal community-controlled organisation. Thirrili has worked closely with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to codesign a model of care that is culturally appropriate and meets the needs of the First Nations people in the ACT.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Partnership Group has operated since July 2019, and is chaired by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and attended by ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander independent community members and representatives from ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Government and NGOs. This group provides advice on culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention and mental health strategies, as well guiding the implementation of these strategies. The group reports to the Coordinator General Mental Health and Wellbeing, Office for Mental Health, and Wellbeing.

### Draft northside clinical services plan

The northside clinical services plan is a key action in the ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030 (ACTHSP) and will inform infrastructure planning on the northside of Canberra including the northside hospital planning.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as a priority population group in the draft plan that uses Australian National Census data to underpin services planning.

ACTHD has internally commissioned development of a demographic data review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT and region. Select data from this report has been presented to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, and work continues on bringing the data to broader community attention in appropriate ways.

The Chief Health Officer (CHO) report provides valuable insights into population health indicators and trends in the ACT, showing how the ACT is tracking over time and in comparison to the rest of Australia. It is important to note that data may not always be comparable.

Data used is sourced from a variety of ACT and national databases, including administrative and surveillance data, cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys and data registries. The new, online CHO reporting format, launched in March 2023, presents the most recent population health data and supporting narrative, complementing the detailed HealthStats ACT indicators.

HealthStats ACT provides up-to-date information for all indicators and measures, meeting the CHO's reporting obligations under the Public Health Act 1997. The new online reporting format will provide a rolling release of featured topics, replacing the biennial CHO Report. Together with HealthStats ACT this provides accessible and up-to-date data on the health of the Canberra community, highlighting public health challenges and opportunities.

The purpose of these featured topics is to refocus our attention on key public health issues impacting the health and wellbeing of our community as we recover from the impacts of COVID 19. The first of these new featured topics are burden of disease and healthy weight in the ACT, showing that Canberrans live longer lives than elsewhere in Australia even as burden of disease and overweight and obesity continue to have significant public health impacts.

### Outcome 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives.

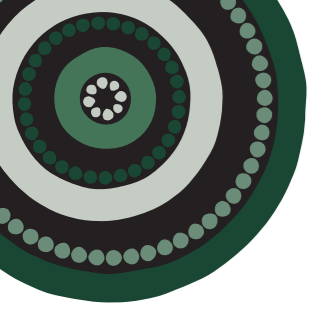
**Target 17.** Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.

- > Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation by 2031.

*No data is available for this outcome for the ACT due to the small population.*

- > Proportion of patients starting treatment on time in Emergency Departments (EDs).
  - In 2021-2022, 46.4 % of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients started ED treatment on time, compared to 48.4 % of non-Indigenous patients.
- > Percentage of elective surgery procedures performed within clinically recommended timeframes.
  - In 2021-22, the proportion of elective surgery procedures performed on time by categories and by type of patients were:
    - Category 1 (required within 30 days): 98.1% (98.5% non-Indigenous)
    - Category 2 (required within 90 days): 55.8% (63.0% non-Indigenous)





- Category 3 (required within 365 days): 61.1% (74.0% non-Indigenous)

- > Proportion of patients who did not wait to be seen in emergency departments.

*This indicator is a proxy of how patients may experience the healthcare system. It reports on the proportion of patients that avoided health care when they need it. This can be related to barriers such as the cultural appropriateness of the healthcare service.*

- In 2021-22, 8.6% of patients did not wait to be seen in emergency department. This compares to a lower proportion of 4.5% for non-Indigenous people.

**Outcome 18: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born strong and healthy.**

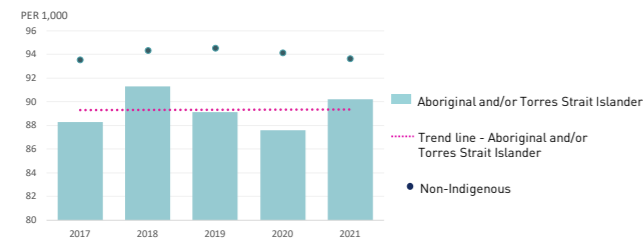
**Target 18.** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.

- > Proportion of babies born each year with a healthy birthweight

- In 2021, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight was 90.2%.

This proportion has no changed significantly since the baseline year (2017).

**Proportion of babies born with a healthy birthweight**  
(2,500- 4, 499 grams)



Source: ACT Health Directorate.

*Latest data available is for the calendar year 2021 and has been included in the figure. 2021 data was not yet reported by the Productivity Commission at the time this report was produced. Please note that this data differs from the data reported by the Productivity Commission as it accounts only for women residing in the ACT.*

- > Annual rate of women attending at least five antenatal visits.

- In 2020, 82.5 % of pregnant women attended at least five antenatal visits.

**Outcome 19: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.**

**Target 19.** Significant and sustained reduction in suicide rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as progress towards zero

- > Rates of suicides of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

*No data is available for this outcome.*

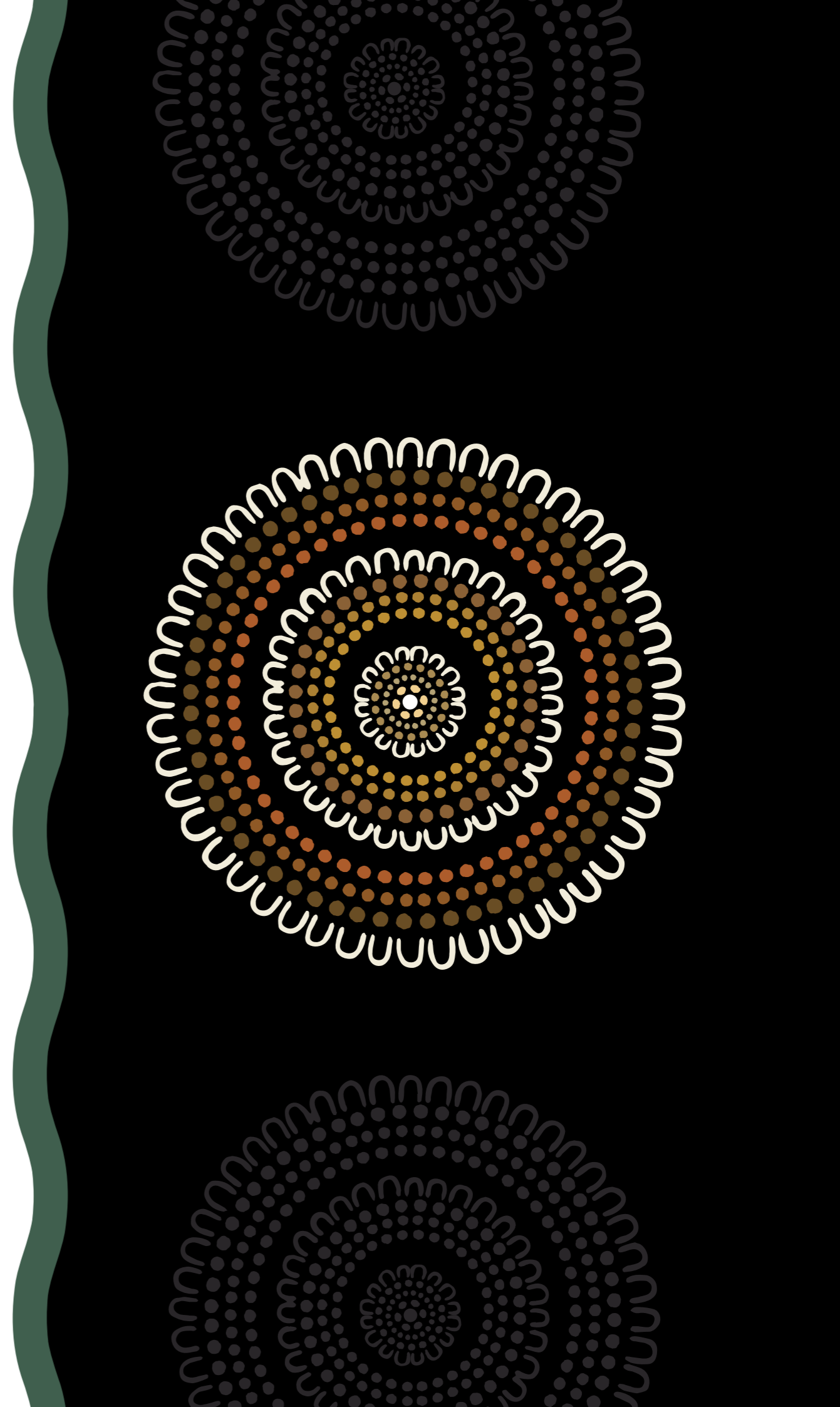
- > Total number of mental health overnight bed days (average over a yearly period)

- In 2020-21, the average number of mental health bed days was 773 days. This is an increase from 664 in 2019 (baseline year).

- > The average length of mental health overnight stays for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

- In 2020-2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients spent on average 16.9 days. This compares to an average of 18.1 days for non-Indigenous patients.

- This represents a decrease from 17.8 days for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and 16.1 days for non-Indigenous patients, in 2019 (baseline year)



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

# Housing

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equitable access to affordable, secure and appropriate housing suitable to their needs.*

The ACT Government is strengthening governance across the housing and homeless sector by improving the capacity and skills of board members and senior staff. This includes the recruitment of two identified positions in the community services directorate. These appointees will provide strategic recommendations for the establishment of a community-controlled housing provider in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

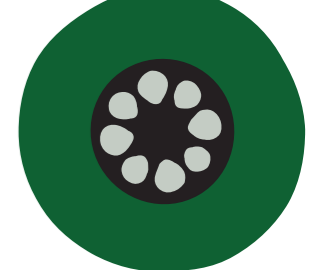
Actions under the second phase of the ACT Agreement will also ensure investment in building a culturally competent and safe housing sector that responds to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's needs. This work includes providing cultural training, engaging with the community to co-design service principles, and strengthening the housing sector by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers to have a dedicated and skilled workforce.

All funded specialist homelessness services provide services and supports to ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. In the 2023-24 Budget, approximately \$134 million over 4-years (2023-24 to 2026-27) was provided to homelessness services.

In 2022-23, the following organisations were specifically funded to support ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness:

- > ACT Council of Social Services (\$148,383.60 GST excl)
- > Gungan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporate (\$97,055.05 GST excl)
- > Winnunga Nimmityja (\$316,212.68 GST excl)
- > Toora Women Inc (\$848,402.90ST excl)

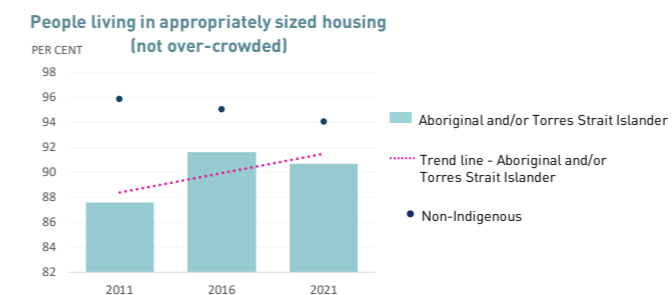
In addition, Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporate manages two properties (head leased from Housing ACT portfolio) for a justice specific supported accommodation project.



**Outcome 20. Aboriginal people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.**

**Target 20.** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australians.

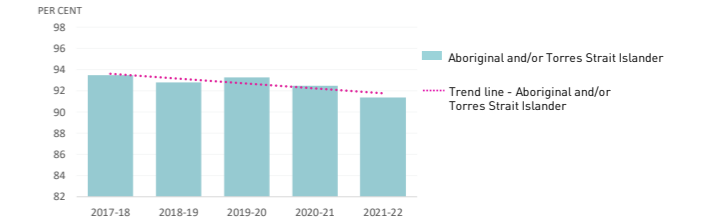
- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in appropriately sized housing.
  - In 2021, 90.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were living in appropriately sized housing (not overcrowded) This is a decrease of almost 1% since 2016 (baseline year) but is above the national levels which is 81.4 %.



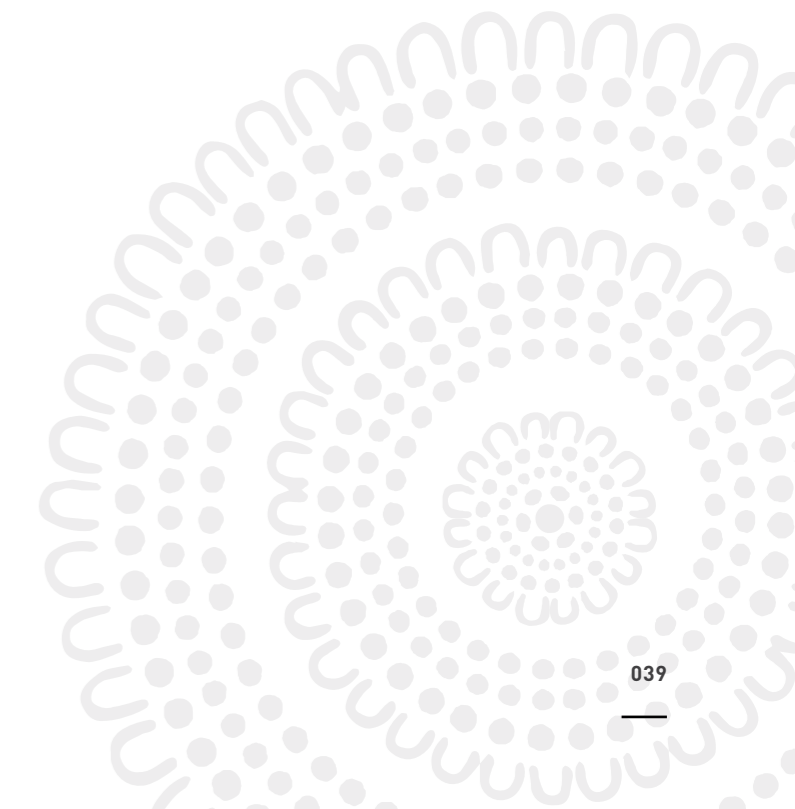
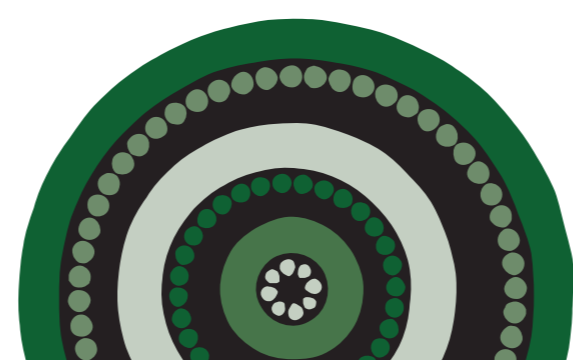
Source: [table CtG9A.1](#) (Productivity Commission). Derived from ABS (unpublished) Census of Population and Housing.

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in public housing appropriately sized.
  - In 2021-22, the proportion of public housing appropriately sized and used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continued to decline. This is a decrease from 93.5 % since 2017-28 (baseline year).
  - As of 30 June 2022, there were 113 more households living in overcrowded conditions compared to 2017-2018. This represents an increase of 13 % in the number of households living in overcrowded conditions.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in the ACT public housing which are appropriately sized (not over-crowded)



Source: [table 18A.35](#) from part G 'Housing and Homelessness' of the Report on Government Services (ROGS), 2023- Productivity Commission.



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

## Justice

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities thrive in a safe environment and have equitable access to justice and culturally safe restorative justice, prevention and diversion programs.*

Adult incarceration rates and recidivism have been reduced since baseline years. However, First Nations adults remain over-represented in the justice system.

The ACT Government is committed to an outcome where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities thrive in a safe environment and have equitable access to justice and culturally safe restorative justice, prevention, and diversion programs.

Phase One of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement focused on delivering more opportunities for young people to participate in culturally safe, restorative justice practices; supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples post release to engage with their community and have access to appropriate housing, healthcare, education and employment; and establishing partnerships across the ACT Government to design activities and initiatives on country to promote health and wellbeing and improve justice outcomes.

### **Phase 2 of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement priorities include:**

- > Increasing the accessibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crime and justice data for use by the local community and other interested persons, to provide evidence for informing programs and facilitate monitoring of outcomes for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- > Delivering an evaluation framework of the impact of Justice reinvestment/ Reducing Recidivism by 25% by 2025 programs; with a focus on programs to reduce overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system.
- > Implementing intensive case management to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people post-release; to increase successful rehabilitation and reintegration into their community and enable access to appropriate housing, healthcare, education, and employment.

Adult incarceration rates and recidivism have reduced since baseline years. However, First Nations adults remain over-represented in the justice system.

The 2022-23 budget provided \$11.5 million over four years to fund a coordinated program of initiatives in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to help reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT's criminal justice system. This includes new initiatives to make a real and immediate impact and continuing established programs that have demonstrated positive results. This included expansion of the Galambany Circle Sentencing Court and Yarrabi Bamirr, the continuation of On Country, Yarning Circles and the Ngurrumbai Bail Support program, trialling alternative Community Corrections reporting sites and renewed Interview Friends Program. Additionally, as part of the Justice Housing Program, ACT Corrective Services is partnering with a local ACCO for the first time to provide a culturally sensitive Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP) for Aboriginal men exiting custody.

Detention rates of young people have increased since 2019 (baseline year).

In May 2023, the ACT Government introduced a bill into the Legislative Assembly to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility over two stages, initially to 12 years and to 14 years within two years of the legislation commencing. This makes the ACT the first Australian jurisdiction to legislate an increase to the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 years.

As an alternative to the current justice response, the Bill will enable children and young people aged under 14, who engage in harmful behaviour, to be referred to a Therapeutic Support Panel, which will consider the individual needs of each child or young person and ensure that they receive the appropriate type and intensity of response required to address those needs. Any child or young person engaging with the panel will be provided with referrals and a plan that is culturally appropriate and supports them to maintain their religion, language, and cultural practices.

The bill also includes support for all children and young people under the age of 18 involved in the criminal justice system by introducing a new community-based intensive therapeutic sentence, which will provide wraparound services for a young offender convicted of a criminal offence to ensure they receive assistance to address their needs and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. The legislation allows for other early supports for families and young people, to divert young people to positive supports and services.

In 2022-23, the Government allocated a total funding of \$1,979,000 over four years. This funding is provided to support young people who come into contact with the justice system with on-call youth workers, access to safe spaces, youth worker follow-up, access to Functional Family Therapy and access to emergency accommodation.

The ACT Government in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community is commencing an On-Country trial program targeting First Nations 10-14-year-old who come into, or are at risk of coming into, contact with the criminal justice system. The program will provide an opportunity to participate in On-Country activities, workshops and experiences at various venues. This is part of an initiative to provide more timely access to justice diversion services to young people before crisis intervention is required.

Yurwan Ghuda (meaning strong child/children in Ngunnawal language) is an On-Country program in the final stage for commencement in September 2023. By supporting First Nations children and youth aged 10-14 years identified as being at risk of engaging with the crime justice system and incarceration, the new program is being trialled as a potential diversionary program to align with the upcoming changes to Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility legislation.



The program will run initially for one to two years followed by a formal evaluation to provide insight into whether further funding is sought to support the program on an ongoing basis with a view to developing it as a formal diversionary program. The ANU evaluation team is being consulted to confirm the evaluation metrics to be built into the trial from the beginning.

Dean Jard is a local Ngunnawal Elder on the Galambany and Warrumbul Circle Sentencing Courts who also works with Yeddung Mura. Dean has an extensive background in working with First Nations youth, including as a Gugan Gulwan worker. Dean is available to provide ongoing facilitation to the cohort and would attend every session to ensure the young people remain on task, and to manage any issues that arise.

Ngunnawal Elder Auntie Violet Sheridan has gifted the program the name 'Yurwan Ghuda' and will provide ongoing cultural advice.

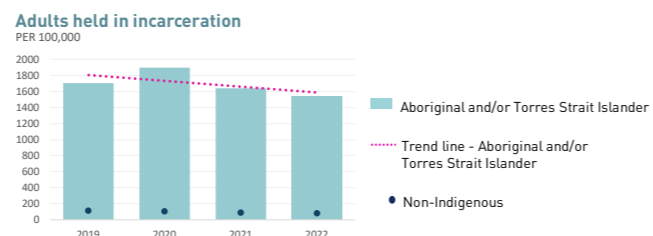
ACT Policing and the Commissioner of Corrections have each endorsed the focus of the program to the 10-14 year demographic, particularly ahead of changes to the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility in the ACT, and noting that the program would ultimately impact on over representation in the medium to longer term.

### Outcome 21: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

**Target 21.** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration to achieve parity with the rate of incarceration of non-Indigenous people.

- > Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration.
  - As at June 2022, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults incarcerated was 1,543.8 per 100,000. This is an improvement from 1641.8 in 2021 and 1703.9 in 2019 (baseline year).
  - Whilst the incarceration rate has been reduced between 2019 and 2022, in 2021-22 and 2020-21 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were,

respectively, 19.6 and 19.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous adults. This is an increase since 2018-19 when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were 15.6 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous people.



Source: [table CtG10A.1](#) (Productivity Commission). Derived from ABS Prisoners in Australia

Ratios between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people were derived from table CtG10A.1 based on reported age-standardised rates. Note that the source for this measure has been amended to align reporting to the National Closing the Gap data and will differ from previous reporting in the 2021 ACT Impact Statement.

- > Proportion of eligible 18-25-year-olds referred to Restorative Justice by ACT Policing.
  - In 2021-2022, 1 out of 2 (50 %) of eligible 18-25-year-olds were referred to Restorative Justice by ACT Policing. This is an increase from the previous year 2020-21, when 1 out of 4 (25%) people were referred to Restorative Justice. However, due to the small numbers caution should be taken when interpreting the data.

Source: ACT Policing (unpublished).

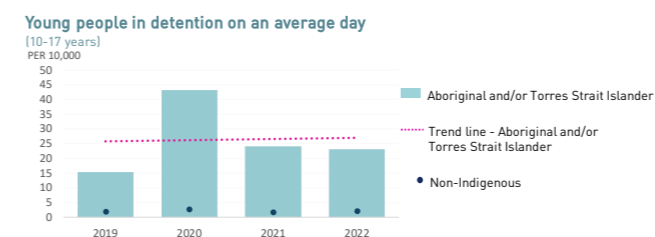
- > Proportion of ex-prisoners returned to custody within two years.
  - In 2021-22, 47.2 % of ex-prisoners returned to custody within two years. A slight reduction from 47.8 % in 2020-21 but a significant reduction from 61.4 % since 2017-18 (baseline year)
  - Overall, since 2017-18 recidivism has been reduced in the ACT for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults by 14.2 %.

Source: Table CA.4, from part C 'Corrective Services', Report on Government Services (ROGS), 2023-Productivity Commission.

### Outcome 22: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

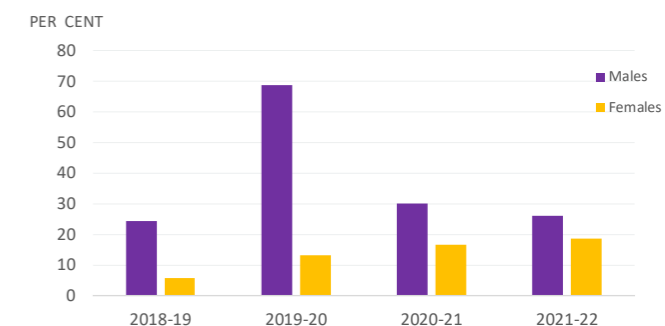
**Target 22.** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17) in detention by at least 30 per cent.

- > Rate of young people aged 10-17 in detention on an average day.
  - In 2021-2022, on an average day, three (3) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were in detention in the ACT. This corresponds to a rate of 22.8 per 10,000 young people on an average day which represents an increase from 15.3 per 10,000 in 2018-19 (the baseline year).
  - In 2018-19, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were 8.8 times more likely to be in detention in 2018-19 compared to non-Indigenous children and young people.
  - In 2021-22, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are 12 times to be in detention than non-Indigenous youth.
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people females and males are affected disproportionately, with males being overrepresented compared to females. However, there is an increase in the proportion of females over the last years, from 5.8 % in 2018-19 to 18.5 % in 2021-22.



Source: [table CtG11A.1](#) (Productivity Commission). From AIHW Youth justice in Australia, Derived from AIHW Youth justice National Minimum Dataset, ABS Australian Demographic Statistics, ABS Estimates and Projections

### Proportion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females in detention on an average day. (10-17 years)



Source: table CtG11A.1 (Productivity Commission). From AIHW Youth justice in Australia, Derived from AIHW Youth justice National Minimum Dataset, ABS Australian Demographic Statistics, ABS Estimates and Projections

- > The number of young people (aged 10-17) in detention during the year.
  - During 2021-2022, 17 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were in detention.
- > Total number of custody nights during a year.
  - During 2021-22, there were 1374 custody nights. This compares to 1,374 custody night in 2028 (baseline year).





**ACT**  
Government



## Priority Reform Two: Building the community-controlled sector.

### Jurisdictional Actions

National Agreement Clause 47: Government Parties will include in their Jurisdictional annual reports information on action taken to strengthen the community-controlled sector based on the elements of a strong sector, as outlined in Clauses 118 and 119.

In their annual reports, jurisdictions, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, may prioritise implementation of different Sector Strengthening Plan actions at different times, depending on the requirements of the sector in a particular jurisdiction. Progress on implementing Sector Strengthening Plans for Health and Early Childhood Development Care, agreed in-principle by Joint Council in December 2021, is outlined below. Ongoing annual reporting will also provide progress updates on jurisdiction’s actions to implement the Housing and Disability Sector Strengthening Plans, which have not yet been agreed by Joint Council, as well as additional Sector Strengthening Plans as they are developed.

Progress on key [insert name of jurisdiction] actions from the Early Childhood Care and Development and Health Sector Strengthening Plans is outlined below.

### Action Table Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Sector Strengthening Plan

#### A. Workforce

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A1	Examine 2021 National ECEC Workforce Census data to develop an accurate picture of the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC workforce across Australia, and the workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC services.	Australian Government  In collaboration with state and territory governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties.	The ACT will engage with the Commonwealth as this action progresses.  The ACT Government is also investing in a comprehensive survey of the ACT’s early childhood education and care workforce capacity and needs, which will include analysis of ACT specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC workforce needs.

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A2	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander career development through secondary school career engagement, preparation of the workforce, on the job staff development, mentoring, career development and progression.	All governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties.	<p>An <i>ACT ECEC Workforce Strategy</i> is planned for release in 2023. It will include workforce initiatives funded in the 2023-24 ACT Budget, such as providing scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators working in Koori Preschool.</p> <p>It will also deliver professional learning for non-government ECECs to enhance educator capability through culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood educational practices.</p>
A3	Support for tertiary qualification pathway programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early educators in line with promising practice.	All governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties.	
A4	Development of long- term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development plan that identifies priorities and actions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development, in conjunction with the implementation of the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy.	All governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties.	
A5	Support, develop and resource community- based workforce development initiatives led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care services.	All governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties.	

## B. Capital Infrastructure

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
B1	Identify capital infrastructure gaps for community controlled ECEC services and support capital infrastructure development through relevant programs to address gaps	All governments, in consultation with sector representatives	To be determined by the parties.	
B2	Scope service gaps to inform roll out of future community-controlled integrated early year's services in locations of high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and high child vulnerability.	All governments and sector representatives	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government has committed to construction of early learning centres as part of all new primary school builds. Planning is also underway to expand Koori preschool provision, including identification of infrastructure requirements aligned with demographic need. This has involved data modelling to identify potential service gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across the Territory.
B3	Identify and plan for opportunities to transfer land and building ownership to community-controlled early years services to support their long-term sustainability and security			

### C. Service Delivery

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
C1	Undertake an assessment of the supporting materials and resources, and Authorised Officer training under the NQF and NQS to address gaps and ensure they provide quality, culturally appropriate and accessible supports to Authorised Officers and services for the regulation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.	All governments and sector representatives.  ACECQA, in collaboration with all governments and sector representatives, for elements of the action within their areas of responsibility.	To be determined by the parties.	<p>ACECQA Authorised Officer training provides the basis for the provision of quality culturally appropriate regulatory practice. Additionally, Authorised Officers working within the Quality Assurance team of CECA have completed the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence</i> course provided by the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia. Authorised Officers have completed relevant training in Trauma Informed Practice and this training has been provided to the broader education and care sector.</p> <p>The update currently being undertaken of the education and care sector’s curriculum documents has seen the addition to the draft documents of a new principle – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives, and the inclusion of the practice of cultural responsiveness. This update has generated consistent referencing within the draft documents to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being. These changes will generate a further increase in supporting materials and resources relevant to Authorised Officers and the sector in general once the documents are approved and implemented.</p>
C2	Provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to operate within the scope of the NQF, where appropriate, and to meet and exceed standards against the NQS.	All governments and sector representatives, in collaboration with ACECQA.	<p>Australian Government funding of \$1.5 million for the Quality and Safety Training Package.</p> <p>Further resources to be determined.</p>	<p>The ACT’s Regulatory Authority is ready to support the sole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled service in Jervis Bay to operate in scope of the NQF.</p> <p>There are currently no community-controlled organisations in the ACT ECEC sector.</p>

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
C3	Support for Aboriginal community controlled ECEC sector through expansion of existing programs and services (Note: Action overlaps significantly with E3 below).	All governments and sector representatives.	Connected Beginnings \$81.8 million CCCFR \$29.9 million.  State and territory support to be determined.	The ACT has partnered with the sole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled ECEC in Jervis Bay, to provide funding for three-year-olds to access two days per week of free ECEC.  The Koori Pre Codesign process confirmed community preferences for Koori preschool to remain connected with public school delivery. Consequently, the ACT's focus is currently on building cultural integrity of both Koori Preschools and sector wide ECECs, including increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC workforce.

#### D. Governance

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
D1	Investigate mechanisms to consolidate and streamline reporting and compliance requirements for community-controlled integrated early years services.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	There are no community controlled integrated early years services offering ECEC in the ACT.
D2	National, state and territory community- controlled peak organisations provide direct supports for quality governance development, with government resources and support.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	There are no community controlled peak organisations in the ACT. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body represents the ACT on the Coalition of Peaks.

## E. Consistent Funding Model

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
E1	Review early childhood education and care program and funding arrangements, including in Implementation Plans, to determine and implement changes needed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled ECEC services.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	<p>The ACT has partnered with the sole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled ECEC in Jervis Bay, to provide funding for three-year-olds to access two days per week of free ECEC.</p> <p>Planning is also underway to expand Koori preschool provision in the ACT. This has involved data modelling to identify potential service gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across the Territory.</p> <p>The Koori Pre Codesign process confirmed community preferences for Koori preschool to remain connected with public school delivery. Consequently, the ACT's focus is currently on building cultural integrity of both Koori Preschools and sector wide ECECs, including increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC workforce.</p> <p>There are no community controlled integrated early years services offering ECEC in the ACT.</p>
E2	Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled service delivery.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	
E3	Develop an agreed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled early childhood education and care sector definition and scope to inform efforts to build and strengthen the sector.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	
E4	Reduce service gaps and establish new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled integrated early years' services in locations of high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and high child vulnerability.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	



## F. Peak Body

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
F1	Develop a national and state/territory intermediary model to strengthen and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC community-controlled services.	Sector-led action in collaboration with:  National Indigenous Australians Agency  Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills, and Employment  State and Territory Governments.	Sector Strengthening Joint Funding Pool (pilot establishment and evaluation) to be supplemented by additional investment by other relevant portfolios and philanthropy  Australian Government, state and territory Departments of Education	<p>There are no community controlled peak organisations in the ACT. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body represents the ACT on the Coalition of Peaks. The ACT is also an active member of the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership with the express aim to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in this area.</p> <p>The ACT Government has had discussions with the Coalition of Peaks Secretariat (national) about the development of an ACT Regional Coalition of Service Providers which could nominate an additional representative to the Coalition of Peaks for the ACT. This would diversify representation and address concerns from the ACT ACCO sector that the Elected Body does not represent their rights and interests. This would also be consistent with other jurisdictions where representatives on the Coalition of Peaks are largely made up from ACCOs.</p>

## Action Table Health Sector Strengthening Plan

### A. Consistent Funding Model

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A1	Develop a needs-based funding model in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector.	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) Australian Government State and Territory Governments	Nil additional financial cost to develop the model.	<p>The ACT Government's introduction of Commissioning of Health services provides an opportunity for the ACT Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector to co-design and plan for future capacity of service needs through a revised need-based funding approach and the development of budget bids.</p> <p>The ACT Health Directorate is engaging in a collaborative commissioning approach to design the future provision of health services delivered by ACT Government funded non-government organisations in the community. The Mental Health Commissioning Process, aims to promote a Mental Health system that can support recovery focussed, integrated, holistic, and outcomes driven services for Canberrans.</p> <p>This project is now in its design phase. The design phase is where the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is exploring how commissioned services can address the priorities identified through earlier phases of commissioning.</p> <p>To guide consultation in this phase, the directorate has developed a 'Blueprint for the Design Phase'. This document highlights key considerations for the commissioning of an effective mental health system and sector. These include the underpinning principles of the sector, consideration of different service categories and acuties of services, and the priority groups who are either at higher risk of poor mental health, or who need specific considerations for service provision. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as a specific priority group.</p> <p>As a consultation document, the Blueprint contains a range of questions on each of its key considerations, including the priority groups, which are seeking feedback from the</p>

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
				<p>community to help define priorities and to design the range of mental health services delivered by ACTHD funded community non-Government organisations (NGOs).</p> <p>The Mental Health Commissioning process, in line with other ACT Government Commissioning Subsectors, recognises that as a result of intergenerational trauma, ongoing impacts of colonisation and social and economic disadvantage, increased morbidity, mortality and disability, reduced social supports as well as racism and discrimination Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are often at an increased risk of developing mental illness.</p>
A2	<p>Re-prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health program funds being directed to mainstream non-government organisations, towards the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector. This includes current and new investments in mental health, drug and alcohol, aged care, and emerging health priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <p>State and Territory Governments.</p>	<p>Nil additional financial cost.</p>	<p>The ACT Government's introduction of Commissioning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health services provides an opportunity for Government to identify the cultural abilities and outcomes of mainstream NGOs. Cultural performance is a critical indicator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing and enables opportunity to re-direct funding to the appropriate services to address the health priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>There are only two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and wellbeing providers in the ACT / and or city state/jurisdiction.</p> <p>Funding of both services, Winnunga Nimmitjiah Health and Community Services (Winnunga) (Primary/Allied health) and Gugan Gulwan (Allied/Social) is through a single select process, where market comparison (none), compliance, accreditation, service performance and consumer feedback is evaluated as required by procurement legislation.</p> <p>Significant investment has been provided to build and refurbish Winnunga and Gulwan infrastructure, to meet community demand and provide appropriate primary health services and culturally appropriate care and social programs.</p>

A3	Optimise utilisation of Medicare in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.	Australian Government Department of Health  NACCO  Sector Support Organisations	\$8.7 million (estimated)	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.  Note –  Small jurisdiction with only Winnunga providing Primary Health services as a community controlled Aboriginal Medical Service in the ACT.
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## B. Workforce

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A4	Invest in a permanent, highly skilled, and nationally credentialed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health workforce.	NACCHO  Sector Support Organisations  Australian Government  State and Territory Governments	\$1.25 million over three years for the continuation of the Indigenous Allied Health Australia Health Academy program in the ACT to increase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce, improve cultural safety	<p>The <i>ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032</i> (the Strategy) was launched on 4 May 2023. It provides the vision, principles, priorities and early actions to build and retain a sustainable health workforce for the ACT and surrounding regions. The strategy contains eight strategic priorities and 23 early actions.</p> <p>The first strategic priority of the Strategy is “A focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and a culturally safe environment”. Under this priority the Strategy includes the following actions, which will commence implementation in 2023-24:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish an employment program with mentoring and support to successfully develop a network across Health with the creation of at least five identified positions across the ACTHD. The mentoring program targeted to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce (\$107,269 will span over four years starting in 2023-24).</li> <li>2. Meet with key community and service provider representatives to identify specific priority actions that will be implemented under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2023-2031.</li> </ol>



No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
			<p>in our services, and deliver better educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students.</p>	<p>In alignment with the <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031</i> and the <i>ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028</i> the ACT Health Directorate has commenced actions to build a greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the broader ACT health workforce.</p> <p>Specific government workforce actions include plans for Canberra Health Services (developed) and development of an ACT Health Directorate workforce plan. Both plans aim to address specific clinical, operational administration and consumer needs in the ACT.</p> <p>Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) is leading the implementation of the National Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Health Academy program in the ACT with the support of ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), University of Canberra, Canberra Health Services, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, and the ACT Education Directorate.</p> <p>The IAHA program is designed to create opportunities for Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander students considering a career in health. The program provides a wraparound culturally appropriate, supportive Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASBA) model.</p> <p>In 2021 the ACT Health Directorate provided a grant of \$50,000.00 to support IAHA to deliver teaching resources, student materials and support to ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete their education and training qualifications;</li> <li>• prepare for the workforce, and build employability skills; and</li> <li>• undertake work readiness through an Australian School Based Apprenticeship.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, a Skills Canberra grant of \$270,170.00 was provided to IAHA under the 2020-21 Future Skills for Future Jobs to support trainee costs over 3 years.</p>

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
				<p>The Academy's first year of operation in the ACT was 2022 with three students graduating in December 2022. The ACT has 10 students enrolled in 2023 and expects increased enrolments in future years. Two graduates have been offered employment at CHS to date.</p> <p>The ACT Health Directorate finalised a deed in April 2023 to allow Academy students to undertake placements in ACT Public Schools (Education Directorate) and a deed with the Community Services Directorate is in progress. These deeds are in addition to the original deed allowing Academy student placements at Canberra Health Services and ACT Health Directorate. The 2023-24 funding for the delivery of the IAHA Health Academy program in the ACT to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce will improve culturally accessible services, as well as improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in senior high school.</p>
A5	Build community-controlled RTO capacity and improve the quality of RTO training within or linked to community-controlled health organisations.	<p>Australian Government</p> <p>State and Territory Governments</p>	To be determined.	<p>This action is likely to be determined in through the <i>ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28</i> and the development of ACT Government approaches to build a greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the broader ACT health workforce.</p> <p>Current ACT vocational educational and training (VET) sector health, and social qualifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are provided by the Yurauna Centre, Canberra.</p> <p>Yurauna is CIT's dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educational Centre of Excellence and provides Certificate in Alcohol and Other Drugs, Community Services, Mental Health, Cultural safety, and Community development.</p>
A6	Convene a Clinical Workforce Taskforce to analyse and systemically address the full range of pertinent industrial, professional, socio-economic and employment impediments affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector.	<p>Australian Government Department of Health</p> <p>NACCHO</p> <p>Sector Support Organisations</p>	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
		Workforce peak bodies		
A7	Resource permanent health care pathways co-designed in jurisdictions through partnerships between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector, its Sector Support Organisation, relevant national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce peak bodies, governments, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, and vocational training/tertiary institutions.	<p>Australian Government</p> <p>State and Territory Governments</p> <p>NACCHO</p> <p>Sector Support Organisations</p> <p>Member services and partners as negotiated.</p>	To be determined.	<p>Through the Indigenous Allied Health Australia Academy Implementation Working Group, the ACT Government is working to formally resource permanent health care pathways in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector.</p> <p>Memberships includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Allied Health Officer, ACT Health Directorate;</li> <li>• Skills Canberra Grants and Programs, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate;</li> <li>• Vocational Education in Secondary Schools, Education Directorate;</li> <li>• Associate Professor Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Canberra; and</li> <li>• Yurauna Centre, Canberra Institute of Technology.</li> </ul> <p>Students undertake a Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance, leading up to a support community-based placement. Canberra Health Services has established tutorials for students and with placement supervisors completing cultural responsiveness training.</p> <p>In 2021/2022, the ACT Government approved a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention, Service, with the aim of helping to reduce suicide, and the impacts of suicide within the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The ACT Government has committed \$1.2 million for this new service over the first two years. The service is being delivered by Thirrili, a lead Aboriginal community-controlled organisation service provider. Thirrili is already providing postvention services in the ACT and is now also providing AfterCare supports. Thirrili has worked closely with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and is finalising the codesign a model of care that will incorporate a range of service elements and will offer a range of supports across the lifespan.</p>

### C. Capital Infrastructure

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A8	Fund major and medium-size capital and physical infrastructure including permanent clinic builds and large-scale renovations, mobile clinics, maintenance, repairs, and extensions to ensure facilities meet building codes and accreditation standards.	Australian Government  State and Territory Governments	\$254.4 million over four years (as announced)	<p>The ACT Government has invested in community major and medium-size capital and physical infrastructure through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Deed of Grant with Winnunga Nimmityjah Health and Community Services, to design an ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Residential Rehabilitation facility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons as a component the Watson Redevelopment project.</li> <li>• The ACT Government is delivering a purpose-built facility with the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to better deliver essential services for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community. The total value of the Government’s commitment to this is approximately \$19m.</li> <li>• The Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF) Farm Master plan, developed in 2021 identifies infrastructure requirements and the necessary investment to support the NBHF residential model and transition to a community run service. Work undertaken in 2022-23 in consultation with sector experts and ACT and Region First Nations Community has identified additional works required to support effective participant outcomes. Design work has begun for these upgrades.</li> <li>• First Stage funding for 2023-24 will deliver important infrastructure that supports the delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural healing services using a therapeutic community approach. Previous ACT Budgets have supported the project with funding to prepare for a transition to residential service delivery under Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control.</li> <li>• This initiative will fund the construction of a new shed at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm, to replace an existing unsafe shed. The shed will be used to safely store important equipment and for outdoor programs.</li> <li>• The proposed development is being managed in such a way to support a Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm residential program in the future, including designing the shed with space for program delivery, which consultation with the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm Board has indicated could be delivered.</li> </ul>



No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A9	Fund staff accommodation required to ensure regional and remote communities have the stable health workforce they require with equitable access to staff accommodation for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.	Australian Government Department of Health  WA Government	\$254.4 million over four years includes funds for clinical staff accommodation only (see A8).  Non-clinical staff – to be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
A10	Fund reliable IT capacity and connectivity for electronic clinical information systems, telehealth, community engagement, and client connection with their community-controlled health services in every region (urban, regional, and remote) and equitable access to other technological and digital innovations to improve culturally safe, cost-effective service deliver.	Australian Government  Department of Health	\$254.5 million over four years (see A8).	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.

## D. Service Delivery

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A11	Rectify overburden of activity reporting to governments to allow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled health sector to focus on outcomes while maintaining accountability.	All jurisdictions	Nil additional financial costs (and release of resources currently diverted to unnecessary reporting).	<p>Under existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector contracts and the introduction of Health Commissioning, the ACT Health Directorate in partnership with service providers has streamlined reporting frequencies to reduce administration burden and replication. This approach allows the sector to focus on organisational performance and outcomes while remaining compliant with data and reporting requirements.</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate is coordinating with the Community Services Directorate to develop test cases for centralised activity reporting, specifically with regard to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.</p>
A12	Develop a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research agenda led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to secure funding for evidence generation the sector has prioritised.	NACCHO  Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
A13	Leverage buying power and economies of scale in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector nationally with minimum procurement targets to increase purchases /contracts from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and enterprises which train and employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	NACCO  Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A14	Fund health workforce leadership development programs and initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in or aspiring to work in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector to maximize service impact and health outcomes.	NACCHO	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.

## E. Governance

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A15	Transition government-managed primary health clinics in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia to community-controlled comprehensive primary health care services and identify locations in all jurisdictions where new community-controlled primary health care services are required to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Australian Government Department of Health  NACCHO  Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
A16	Fund Board corporate governance programs including needs assessment, capability	NACCHO	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
	development and support including independent expertise where required for CEO recruitment and essential criteria for CEOs across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector.	Sector Support Organisations		

#### F. Peak Body

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A17	Expand independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on government and non-government bodies and other decision-making entities whose decisions affect the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Australian Government Department of Health  NACCHO  Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.